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MEMOIRS
OF
SIR EDWARD BLOUNT

Sir Edward Blount, K.C.B.

MEMOIRS

OF

SIR EDWARD BLOUNT

K.C.B. &c.

EDITED BY

STUART J. REID

AUTHOR OF 'THE LIFE AND TIMES OF SYDNEY SMITH'
'LORD JOHN RUSSELL' ETC.

WITH 3 PHOTOGRAVURE PLATES

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PREFACE

I FEEL I owe an apology to the reader for the fragmentary nature of these reminiscences. It is no easy task, however, for a man in the ninety-fourth year of his age to recall the details of a life that has been both long and eventful, much less to give a full and consecutive account of his experiences. This, I hope, will not be expected of me. In responding to the urgent and repeated request of friends to place on record some of the incidents with which I have been connected, and to give my reminiscences of some of the men with whom I have come into contact in England and France during a particularly interesting period in the relations between the two countries, I have not attempted to write a history of my times. All that it has been possible for me to do has been to set down the impressions left upon me through the vista of years of some events, and of a few men of note. Unfortunately, I have never kept a diary, and letters and documents which might have been of

interest have either been destroyed or disappeared, with the exception of the letters which I wrote to my wife from Paris during the siege, which she carefully kept. I am, therefore, obliged to trust almost entirely to my memory, which is still tenacious, especially in reference to the early part of my career. I hope that any lapses which have escaped me may be forgiven by the reader. My motto has been 'Nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice,' and in writing these recollections of men that are gone, and of times that most who are now alive know only by hearsay, I have endeavoured to speak, with fairness and candour, of men as I found them.

I owe a debt of gratitude to my friend and neighbour, Mr. Stuart Reid, for the trouble he has taken in putting my notes in order, as well as in editing this volume and seeing it through the press. Nor should I forget to mention my obligations to Mr. J. G. Colclough, formerly Secretary of the British Chamber of Commerce, Paris, for services rendered in connection with special chapters of this work.

EDWARD BLOUNT.

Imberhorne : East Grinstead.
May 15, 1902.

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MEMOIRS

OF

SIR EDWARD BLOUNT

CHAPTER I

EARLY YEARS

I was born on the 16th of March, 1809, at Bellamour, near Rugeley, in the county of Stafford, and I am the second son and namesake of Edward Blount, afterwards M.P. for Steyning, Sussex, and the grandson of Sir Walter Blount, sixth baronet, of Mawley Hall, Shropshire.

The Blounts trace their origin to the Le Blounds, Counts of Guisnes in Picardy. Count Raoul de Guisne, who was head of the family when William of Normandy invaded England, had three sons, and all of them accompanied the Conqueror. One returned to France; but the other two, Sir Robert and Sir William Le Blound,

settled in England, and from them the Blounts in the kingdom are descended. Sir Robert Le Blound was commander of the ships of war, and he was one of the Conqueror's Council. His brother, Sir William, was General of the Foot. Sir Robert Le Blound appears in the Domesday Book as the possessor of thirteen lordships in Suffolk, and he also was rewarded by a grant of land in Middlesex. He was styled, from his principal possessions, Baron of Ixworth and Lord of Orford. He married the youngest daughter of Henry, Earl Ferrers, and his son, Gilbert Le Blound, founded at Ixworth a priory of Augustine monks, which flourished until the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII. Sir William Le Blound, on the other hand, had an ample inheritance in Lincolnshire bestowed upon him by the Conqueror.

The Blounts of Soddington, in Worcestershire, and of Mawley, near Cleobury, in Shropshire, are descended from William, the second son of Sir Robert Le Blound. It is one of the proudest boasts of the family that, throughout the vicissitudes of centuries, it has remained loyal to the old faith, and that more than one of its members has had to suffer for his devotion to the Catholic Church.

Knighthood was frequently bestowed upon members of the family, but the first baronet, Sir Walter Blount, was created by Charles I. in 1642. He was an ardent Cavalier, and suffered much in the Royal cause, being imprisoned first at Oxford, and afterwards in the Tower of London. His seat at Soddington was greatly damaged by Cromwell's soldiers, because his servants refused to make arms at a forge. His estates were ordered to be confiscated in 1652, and he died in 1654. One of his sons, Captain Peter Blount, who shared his devotion to the House of Stuart, fought at the battle of Worcester.

He was succeeded by Sir George Blount, who died at Mawley in 1657; and a younger son of the latter was Edward Blount, who succeeded to his mother's estate of Blagden, in Devonshire. Edward Blount was a scholar and a wit, and lives in literature as the intimate friend of Alexander Pope, of whose friendship he was proud. 'I have a secret pleasure,' he says in one of his letters, 'to have some of my descendants know that their ancestor was great with Pope.' Like myself, he spent much time in France, though for a different reason.

The Jacobite rebellion of 1715—with which, by the way, he had nothing whatever to do—cast

suspicion on all Catholics, and rigorous measures were enacted against them; so that, to borrow his words, 'Either their homes had to be left, or they were made too narrow for them to turn in.' He left no sons, and Blagden was sold; but his eldest daughter, Elizabeth, in 1735 married the first Lord Clifford, and his second, Mary, in 1727 became the wife of Edward, ninth Duke of Norfolk. It is said of her that she graced that high station not merely by beauty, but by vivacity and talent. She died in 1773.

The Blounts of Soddington and Mawley have always been proud of Shakespeare's allusions in 'Henry the Fourth' and 'Richard the Third' to members of their family. Sir Walter Blount, whom the King describes in the former play as 'a dear, a true, industrious friend,' fell at the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403. Sir Richard Blount was one of the Privy Council of Edward VI., and Lieutenant of the Tower, whilst Sir Charles Blount was slain at Oxford in 1644, in the cause of Charles I. But enough of such memories.

My mother was Frances, daughter of Francis Wright, of Fitzwalters, Essex. My father died in March 1843, and my mother in May 1859.

Their family consisted of five sons and five

daughters. My eldest brother, Walter Aston Blount, was Clarencieux King of Arms, and Secretary of the Order of the Bath. He went on two missions from the English Court, on the staff of the Special Ambassador. The first was on the occasion of the investiture of the King of Portugal as a Knight of the Order of the Garter, when His Majesty was pleased to confer upon him the insignia of a Commander of the Royal Portuguese Order of the Conception. When the Order of the Garter was conferred on the Emperor Alexander II. of Russia, he again represented at St. Petersburg the College of Heralds. His Imperial Majesty graciously gave him a gold casket, with his portrait mounted in diamonds. He was also a Knight of the Légion d'Honneur. Walter Aston died unmarried in February 1894.

Another brother was Captain Herbert Blount, of the 68th Light Infantry. He served in Canada during the frontier troubles, as well as in the East and West Indies, and during the war in the Crimea. He was injured before Sebastopol, being severely bruised by the fall of a gun-carriage. He afterwards went to Burma, and finally to India, where he served during the Mutiny, and rose to the rank of lieutenant of

his regiment. He was created Knight of the Imperial Orders of the Légion d'Honneur and of the Medjidie. He died in May 1860, and, like his eldest brother, was never married. It is a curious fact that three brothers—Walter Aston, Herbert, and myself—were members of the French order of the Légion d'Honneur.

I had two other brothers—George Thomas, who died in 1899, and Henry, who died in February 1865.

George was for many years in the Audit Office, and afterwards was transferred to the War Office, at a time when it was said that promotion should turn on merit rather than on length of service. He afterwards devoted himself to works of charity, and was for many years associated with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul.

My youngest brother, Henry, was a distinguished member of the Benedictine Order (of which he was ultimately President in England), and was attached for many years to the college of that Order at Prior Park, near Bath. He was subsequently appointed mission priest at Cheltenham, where he was highly esteemed by all religious communities. A memorial window was placed in Cheltenham to his memory, and

amongst the subscribers were many people who had little sympathy with the Catholic Church. He was President of the Benedictine College, and amongst his students was Cardinal Vaughan, now Archbishop of Westminster.

My eldest sister, Mary, married her first-cousin, Sir Edward Blount, of Mawley Hall, Shropshire, and died in May 1893.

My second sister, Constantia, died unmarried in August 1894. The next in age, Apollonia, entered, rather late in life, the Visitation Convent at Westbury-on-Severn, and died some years ago as a member of that community of ladies.

My sister Laura, who is now upwards of eighty, is still a Sister of Mercy at Handsworth, near Birmingham, where is also one of my nieces. She was one of the chief founders of Maryvale Orphanage, an institution which is housed in the old school-buildings at Oscott, near Birmingham, where I was educated. I built for them a large school to which Birmingham still sends from four to five hundred Catholic children. An inspector once drew attention to the fact that nuns were in the habit of stopping the work to say the Angelus at noon, and that they also put a light on each side of a picture of the Blessed Virgin, contrary to regulations.

Such criticisms of Catholic observances are, in my opinion, but trivial and unwarranted, and many of the school inspectors now admit as much. In recent years I have established Catholic schools near my own residence, Imberhorne, East Grinstead, which are attended by about eighty children. These schools are under the charge of two Sisters of Mercy, and most of the scholars, though Protestants, have come from other schools in the town because they appreciate the teaching.

Fanny, my youngest sister, married Mr. Henry Pownall, who was for many years in charge of the Richmond branch of the London and County Bank. She died in November 1858. Her son Bernard is at the head of the Catholic Mission at Shepherd's Bush, where he has a very large and poor parish. He works hard, looks after the prisoners in the gaol, and, I think I may add, accomplishes a vast amount of good.

The long association of my family with Shropshire came out rather oddly in a discussion between some farmers at an audit dinner at Mawley Hall a few years ago. Several tenants were contesting the point as to which of their families could boast of having rented land for the longest period on the estate, when the

woodman, named Allen, proved from documents, to the satisfaction of all present, that his ancestors had either been in the employment of, or had held the position of tenant farmers under, the Blount family for a period of nearly 800 years. His ancestors came over from Normandy with the family at the time of the Conquest, and from father to son, right up to the present time, they had been retained on the estate.

One of my earliest recollections, as a child of six, is the arrival in hot haste of a postboy at my father's house, Bellamour, bringing the great tidings of the battle of Waterloo. The postboy, I can well recall, was decorated with ribbons, and so was his horse. I also saw, after the Peace of 1815, numerous wounded soldiers going in barges along the Grand Junction Canal close to my father's house. The gallant fellows were on their way to their garrisons or their homes in the North. I can also recall with perfect vividness a triumphal progress of Lord Anglesey through Lichfield. He had just returned from Waterloo, and was on his way to his seat, Beaudesert. The carriage was drawn by men in blue jackets, and all the yeomanry and gentry formed his bodyguard. The scene when Lord Anglesey arrived opposite the Cathedral was magnificent,

and I can never forget the applause and enthusiasm of the people. I got a good view of the Peninsular hero at the moment, and as a child was impressed by seeing his one remaining leg propped upon a cushion in the carriage, as he slowly drove past amid the cheers of the crowd.

I was sent between the age of six and seven to a grammar-school at Rugeley kept by the vicar of the town. It was attended by a mixed set of boys, composed of the sons of the gentry of the county and those of the town. My elder brother and I went to the school on donkeys, and the road between my father's house and the academy ran along the towing-path of the canal a distance of two miles.

Corporal punishment in those days, even for slight offences, prevailed. Frequent use of the cane was made in the school at Rugeley, and the dust used to fly in consequence from our jackets. This was salutary discipline, and I am bound to add that we often had ourselves to blame for the ordeal. We had to rough it all through our studies, were unaccustomed to luxuries, and quickly learnt self-reliance. At the same time, the range of our studies was much more restricted than at present.

At Bellamour I learnt French from an *émigré*

priest named Father Malvoisin. He was an excellent but rather eccentric man, and used to make us laugh by his quaint and remarkable English. On one occasion my father lent Father Malvoisin a horse, in order that he might ride over to Lichfield, a distance of ten miles. The priest was a mild man and absent-minded, so my father told him that he must take care of the animal, and not allow him to go too fast. On his return it was plain that the horse had been over-ridden; and when he was taxed with the fact, the good man replied in broken English that his steed had, so to speak, taken the bit into his mouth, and that as for himself, he did not like to 'contrary' him.

After Father Malvoisin left Rugeley he wrote me a long letter, and, wishing to say that he hoped that my dear father would live for many years, he looked up in the dictionary the equivalent for the word *préservé*, with the result that what he wrote was that he hoped that my revered parent would be 'pickled' for many a long day. His principal amusement was destroying thistles with a long stick. After leaving us he went as chaplain to the Neville family at Holt, and wrote me that when he wanted to continue the destruction of thistles Mr. Neville stopped him

with the odd remark, 'that they kept the grass warm in winter.'

In 1819, when ten years old, I was sent, with my elder brother, to St. Mary's College, Oscott, five miles from Birmingham, a Catholic seat of learning which was founded, in 1794, under the auspices and with the aid of the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Petre, Lord Stourton, Sir John Throgmorton, Sir Walter Blount, and other Catholic noblemen and gentlemen, to provide for the Catholic students who, in the previous year, had to leave the English College at Douai in consequence of the French Revolution. This College was founded in 1568, early in Elizabeth's reign, by Cardinal Allen, when the penal laws made it impossible for English Catholics to be educated at home.

The names of Blount and Blunt occur many times in the list of students at Douai. When the masters and students returned to England, the Seminary at Sedgley Park, at that time the only Catholic educational establishment in England, was unable to cope with the sudden demands made upon it. Each ecclesiastical district in England sought to provide for the education of its own youth by the establishment of a local college; and in this way Ushaw,

Stonyhurst, and other Catholic seats of learning arose, which linked the old Seminaries on the Continent with Catholic culture in England at the present day.

Oscott was at first a very modest establishment, comprising a refectory, schoolroom, playroom, dormitory, and several private rooms for masters and students. The Rev. John Bew, D.D., was the first president. On his resignation in 1808 he was succeeded by the Rev. Thomas Potts, a veritable Dr. Busby in his love of the cane. When I entered the College, on August 16, 1819, Oscott had been not merely enlarged but remodelled, in consequence of the interest taken in it by the illustrious Bishop Milner, who named it St. Mary's College.

When I first went to Oscott the headmaster was Dr. Thomas Walsh, who remained there till 1825, when he was consecrated Bishop and made Vicar Apostolic of the Central District. His successor was Monsignor Weedall, who held the post until 1840, when he was succeeded by Dr. Nicholas Wiseman, afterwards Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster. Both Dr. Walsh and Dr. Weedall were kind and able men, and an appeal to either of them, in case of punishment by an inferior master, was always patiently

considered, though access to them with a grievance was not always possible. Dr. Weedall did not limit his work to Oscott. He took great interest in the neighbouring population, and had a kindly word for everybody, especially for the poor.

He used to tell some good stories. Once he overtook a farmer, quietly walking across the fields, and promptly turned the conversation to the duty of doing good as long as life lasted. 'Why, yes, sir,' was the reply, 'we must all do what we can. You gentlemen mind your books and stick to your learning, while we farmers manure our fields and get as good crops as we can. Yes, we can all do good in our way.' Another adventure, which he was fond of relating, took place in France. He wanted to say Mass at a certain church, but the *sacristain* had his doubts about his credentials. He therefore gravely told the visitor, 'Eh bien! dites-moi donc l'Orate fratres,' as a test of his being really a priest. Dr. Weedall duly passed the ordeal, whereupon the jealous custodian of the church exclaimed, 'Voilà où je les attrape!'

Amongst the staff of teachers at Oscott in my time was the Rev. Charles Frederick Husenbeth, who afterwards wrote the biography

of Monsignor Weedall. He was a remarkably eloquent man, as well as a distinguished scholar. As a lad, I served his Mass frequently. In spite of his learning, he had at least one old superstition, for he kept a frog as a weather-gauge, and was fully persuaded that when it put its nose out of water bad weather was approaching. Dr. Husenbeth was for many years chaplain to Lord Stafford at Cotessy, and in later life Provost-General of Northampton.

At Oscott there were about eighty boys, about one-third of whom were students for the priesthood. The nicknames for the latter among the elder lads were 'demigods' and the 'divines,' and in their way they were inclined to lord it over us. The school was frequented by the sons of many old Catholic families, and amongst them no less than six Jerninghams, one of whom became Lord Stafford of Cotessy. They were the brothers and cousins of Gertrude Frances Jerningham, who afterwards became my wife. Other boys whom I recall, amongst my schoolfellows, belong to the families of Stafford, Mostyn, Preston, Fitzherbert, and Scully.

Our life at Oscott was rough, and in many respects so hard that I am tempted to compare

it to the realistic picture which Charles Dickens gives in the pages of 'Nicholas Nickleby' of school life at Dotheboys Hall. We rose at five in summer and winter, and I well remember one of the masters, a priest named Duckett, who used to wake us up by saying: 'Now, boys, out of bed as quick as you can,' adding the encouraging remark on cold mornings, 'The water in your basins is frozen.' Before breakfast we had Mass and 'meditation,' and about an hour's study. Then breakfast of bread and milk. We spent the forenoon in school, and had dinner at one. After further study and exercise, bread and beer were dispensed from a window. This meal was in reality the scrapings of the dinner. After that we were sent back to study, and went to bed at nine o'clock.

Still, we contrived to enjoy ourselves, and sometimes not only in boisterous fashion, but in dangerous fashion. I recall to this day the sorrowful impression made on me by the death of a lad with whom I was intimate, named Handford, a member of an old Catholic family in Worcestershire, who was killed whilst in my company. Three of us—Handford, a boy called Grafton, and myself—were romping one day out of bounds

in a barn, when Handford by some means was wounded by a pitchfork which stood end uppermost amongst the hay we were tossing about. Grafton and myself persisted in thinking that it was a trivial accident; and, ignorant of the extent of the mischief, and fearful, moreover, of punishment, we kept the affair a profound secret for some hours. Poor Handford died twenty-four hours after the occurrence. I can well recall the coroner's inquest, which was held at the school, and at which I appeared as a witness. A verdict of accidental death was brought in, and the sad event has remained with me all my life as a pathetic memory, especially as I was greatly attached to the poor fellow, who was a most genial as well as high-spirited boy.

We had half-holidays on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and on these occasions were allowed to go to some woods at Sutton. We used to amuse ourselves with 'bandy,' a game played with crooked sticks tipped with iron, which all old students of Oscott will remember. It was rather a rough pastime, and we often came back with sore shins. We were also allowed to follow the hounds on foot in the neighbourhood, and were well received by the master of the hunt. The parents of some of us were acquainted

with the gentry of the neighbourhood, and we privileged lads were frequently invited to the houses of Sir William Scott, of Barr Hall, and of other local gentlemen. At a later period, when we rose to the upper forms in the school, we had more liberty. Occasionally we broke quite out of bounds and ran off to Birmingham in search of excitement.

One of the most frequent and honoured visitors to the school was the famous Dr. Milner, Vicar Apostolic and Bishop of the Central District, who had his own apartments at Oscott. He was the author of the well-known Catholic work entitled 'The End of Religious Controversy,' a book which was published in 1818, and ran through many editions, producing a great impression in religious circles at the time of its publication. Daniel O'Connell used to tell, with a smile, of his having complimented Bishop Milner in later years upon the great value of this book, expressing his own indebtedness to it, adding that the Bishop, who had taken part in much subsequent theological controversy, replied, 'I am getting too old, otherwise I would write a supplement to it.' But if Dr. Milner lacked the humour of the great Irish orator, he was a man of great ability and

considerable originality, and he still holds a foremost place amongst English Catholic theologians of the nineteenth century. Dr. Milner had many peculiarities, one of which was his habit of driving about in a dogcart, on the back of which, instead of a crest, a fish was prominently painted. The explanation was that the Greek word 'Ἰχθύς,' signifying fish, forms an acrostic, the first letters of which are the initials of the words, 'Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.'

I cannot say that, when at school, I was a hard-working student, but, for all that, by making a fierce push towards the close of the term, I contrived to carry off several prizes. I also took part in the annual plays, and was sometimes brought forward to recite a poem. Once I was entrusted with a recitation from Byron, in which there were two or three risky lines, which the President thought were not suitable for youthful lips or ears. They had therefore been carefully expunged from the copy which was given to me to learn; but when the time came I took care to put them in, as I knew the post-chaise was ordered and there was no time to punish me. This trick of mine excited the merriment of everybody assembled, and some grave and reverend personages who were present

seemed to relish, even more than the rest, my boyish audacity.

I stayed at Oscott until I was a well-grown youth, and, though more fond of sport than of study, I left its gates at Midsummer 1827, at the age of eighteen, in possession of some knowledge of Latin and Greek, which for many years afterwards I continued to cultivate. I can still recite passages from Virgil, Horace, Xenophon, and other classical writers, though I find the habit of doing so is becoming obsolete. I left school rich in pleasant friendships.

St. Mary's, Oscott, is still a seat of learning, but the old school-buildings are now known as Maryvale, and used as an infirmary for old people, which is maintained by public subscription, under the control of a religious community. I feel an additional interest in the place, as my own sister holds there the post of Lady Superior.

On leaving Oscott, I was placed for a short time by my father in the London office of the Provincial Bank of Ireland, and I lived at his house in Great Cumberland Street. He was one of the founders and, for many years, one of the directors of this Bank, which had its head-quarters in London and branches in Dublin, Cork, Limerick, and other Irish cities and towns.

My father was associated with Daniel O'Connell, and the Provincial Bank of Ireland was established as a Catholic bank in opposition to the National Bank of Ireland, which was Protestant. I remember being sent on one occasion to Cork with a large amount of gold, which was required to meet a run on the bank in that city—a mission which I successfully accomplished. A curious mishap, however, befell another clerk who was sent to Ireland about the same time in charge of a parcel of gold. Whilst crossing a brook near Fermoy, an accident happened, and the gold was thrown into the water. The incident brought out the natural honesty of the Irish peasant, for, poor as they were, they helped in the recovery of the money, which was picked up without the loss of a single coin.

On my return from Ireland I entered the public service as an attaché at the Home Office, during Canning's short-lived Ministry, and was in the office of Mr. Spring Rice, afterwards Lord Monteagle, who was the Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department.

When at the Home Office I went frequently from Downing Street to the House of Commons with the despatch-box of Mr. Spring Rice. I used to sit under the gallery of the old House

of Commons, with other young clerks in attendance on the Ministers. It was our duty to be present at the beginning of the debate, and frequently we were on duty not merely through the night, but until Parliament rose next morning. It sometimes happened that the day, as Sydney Smith would have put it, was 'well-aired' before we escaped from what seemed to us interminable harangues.

I heard all the principal speakers of that epoch, and among them Daniel O'Connell, whose eloquence was remarkable, and has scarcely, in my opinion, received justice. Once, on the Catholic question, he spoke for seven hours, and capped every climax with Byron's words: 'Know ye not, who would be free, themselves must strike the blow?'

> Freedom's battle once begun,
> Bequeath'd by bleeding sire to son,
> Though baffled oft, is ever won.

Macaulay, who entered Parliament in 1830, was, I am inclined to think, the most impressive orator I heard in my younger days. Whatever the hour was, the House immediately filled to overflow when he rose to address it.

Once, while Sir Charles Wetherell, a Tory, who afterwards obtained notoriety in the country

by his uncompromising, not to say truculent, speeches against the Reform Bill, was talking vehemently in the House, a bit of his shirt appeared between his waistcoat and his trousers —he did not wear braces. O'Connell, who was seated opposite, saw his opportunity, and cried out, pointing to his adversary: 'I am glad to see that for one moment my opponent has a lucid interval.'

The agitation about Catholic Emancipation was then at its height, and I found myself in the thick of the movement, for my father was honorary secretary of the Catholic Association, and employed me as his assistant. On Sundays he took me to Holland House to breakfast, where I met all the distinguished Liberals who were friends of the cause. I remember perfectly Lord Holland, as well as many of his guests, including that chartered libertine Sydney Smith, Lord Lansdowne, Sir James Mackintosh, and especially Sir Francis Burdett, a tall, thin, energetic man, eccentric in his dress, but enthusiastic, beyond description, about Catholic Emancipation. It was at Holland House that I first met Lord Brougham. I came to know him well, and, indeed, kept up an acquaintance with him to the close of his life in the year 1868. On one

occasion, many years ago, I crossed with him from Dover to Boulogne. On board the boat there was a large deputation from the Peace Society, dressed as Quakers in those days, which was proceeding to Paris. On our arrival at the French port, Lord Brougham, always eager and impulsive, was the first passenger to mount the ladder from the deck to the quay. The fisherwomen of the town presented him with a bouquet as soon as he set foot on the shore, as they imagined he was the head of the Peace deputation. Brougham received this mark of attention with great irritability, and protested in militant terms, in ridiculous French, against being mistaken for a Quaker or anything of the sort.

In after-life I saw him frequently, for he was often in Paris. His French was atrociously bad, but he rattled on without any hesitation, and was listened to politely by people who scarcely understood a word that he said. At Cannes, where he built himself a villa, he was popular, and there he mixed a good deal in society. When he found that the new railway was to run between the sea and his villa, he fell foul of me as a director of the Paris, Lyons, and Mediterranean line, and, though I was willing to help

him to the best of my power, the tracings which intercepted his villa from the sea could not be changed, even to please an ex-Lord Chancellor of England. He was greatly annoyed, and declared in energetic and picturesque language that he would forthwith cut the place, and the country as well—a hasty resolution, which on second thoughts he had the good sense to abandon.

It is not generally known that Lord Brougham, in 1848, was so enamoured with the French Revolution that he wanted to be a Deputy in France, and at the same time to keep his position in political life in England. He was told, however, in high quarters on both sides of the Channel, that this was an impossibility, seeing that the law does not permit a man to possess a double nationality. I saw him frequently in later life, but it was sad to witness the eclipse of his wit and intellectual vigour, though to the last he retained his keen interest in public affairs, and, as all the world knows, was ever a fighter.

Lord and Lady Holland remain indelibly impressed on my memory. The former was a most amiable man, a fascinating host, courteous to every one, and he went out of his way to

notice the youngest and least distinguished of his guests. Lady Holland, though a clever and sarcastic talker, was rather distant, and she often made those about her wince by her delicate but barbed remarks. As a youth, I felt rather shy in her presence.

Even in those days I had frequent opportunities of meeting Lord Palmerston, who was always most considerate, and always had something kind to say, even to the youngest attaché. Once, when I was at the Foreign Office, Lord Palmerston came out into the Chancellery, where a number of us were at work, and exclaimed: 'What a shocking bad smell there is here!' At first no one could discover any clue to the mystery. Presently Lord Palmerston had a happy thought. 'Pull that bookcase away from the wall,' he exclaimed. As soon as this was done, a dead cat was found. Palmerston looked at it for a moment, and then said, with sly humour and in his usual jocular manner, 'Ah! that, I suppose, was the cat that was let out of the bag.' Lord Palmerston shone both in politics and society, for in truth he was as amiable as he was capable.

He used to ride a great deal about London, and always with a flower between his teeth. It was his habit to stop opposite certain club-

windows in St. James's Street and Pall Mall, in order to talk across the pavement with the members. Once, when somebody was begging for a decoration, he exclaimed, 'Give him the Thistle, for he is such an ass that he is sure to eat it.' This story is sometimes placed to the credit of Lord Melbourne, but my recollections of the period make me certain that Lord Palmerston is entitled to it.

Years later, a public dinner was given to Admiral Sir Charles Napier at the Reform Club, at which I was present. It was rendered memorable by a remarkable speech from Lord Palmerston. After complimenting the Admiral on his services, he wound up by saying: 'I am not a Frenchman, or yet a German,' and after ringing the changes on other nationalities, he added, '*Civis Romanus sum*,' and sat down amid enthusiastic applause.

When a clerk in Downing Street I copied the despatches of the battle of Navarino, which was fought on October 20, 1827, by Sir Edward Codrington, and ended in the destruction of the entire Turkish fleet. I remember the joy expressed by the Government of the day;[1] but

[1] The King, in spite of the opinion of his Ministers, sent a despatch: 'Go it, Bill!' (Codrington).

this joy was of short duration, for they were forced to insert in the King's Speech, in deference to the Duke of Wellington, mention of the 'untoward event.' I clearly remember a discussion over that phrase at the Home Office.

I frequently saw O'Connell. He was flowery and fat, with a ready tongue and a great power of appealing to sentiment, but had the characteristically Irish quickness of temper, which more than once brought him into unnecessary conflict with his supporters in Ireland, as well as with his friends in England. Once I assisted at a Catholic meeting at the Thatched House, at the corner of St. James's Street. After dinner, O'Connell had a violent discussion, not to say dispute, with Mr. Stapleton, whose descendant is now Lord Beaumont. They got to high words, and the disturbance was so great that it nearly ended in blows. I afterwards saw a good deal of O'Connell in Ireland, and was present at the marriage of his eldest son, Maurice, in the Kerry mountains, to Miss Fitz-Simon. It was a jovial occasion, and the consumption of whisky-punch was most notable.

O'Connell quarrelled with the English Catholics, who, according to him, were too much inclined to temporising, and were always so

afraid of 'indisposing the Government.' He once made use of the expression that he had such a poor opinion of them that he was quite prepared to cease all further association with them, or, as he tersely put it, 'to cut the painter.' He had great faults with his great qualities, but he did much excellent service for Ireland, and, in spite of his foibles, no one did more to bring about Catholic Emancipation.

One other Irish politician and orator, whom I vividly recall, was Richard Lalor Sheil. He had a high-pitched voice, and was somewhat theatrical in his gesture, but his speeches were vivid and impassioned. He wrote them out before delivery, for he was not a good extempore speaker. I remember Sheil once went to address a hostile crowd at Blackheath on the subject of the Catholic claim. They would not listen to him, and he was forced to abandon the attempt of addressing them. He had, however, taken the precaution of sending his carefully prepared address to the reporters before the meeting began, and so, though it was never delivered, it appeared the next morning in all the glory of print.

I was not personally acquainted with the Duke of Wellington, but I remember him distinctly. I used to see him walking up St. James's

Street with Sir Henry Hardinge. At the time of the Catholic Emancipation he fought a duel with the Earl of Winchilsea in connection with that question. The Duke—it was his first and only duel—deliberately aimed wide, and the Earl fired into the air, and afterwards made an apology for his reckless assertions. Caricatures of this duel were in all the shop-windows of the day.

I ought to have said that at Maurice O'Connell's marriage I met The O'Gorman Mahon, whom I already knew slightly in London. He was a most popular man, fine-looking, and very much admired by the ladies. I remember once calling upon him at his hotel in London. He was in bed, and I was a little startled to find that by his side was a loaded pistol, on which were engraved the words: 'Dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori.' I afterwards saw much of him in Paris, and found that he was fond of a practical joke. One instance of this must suffice. The Bey of Algiers was expected in the French capital, and apartments for the dusky potentate had been taken at the Hôtel Durand. The O'Gorman Mahon, who was staying at the house, was amused at the curiosity of the expectant crowd. He therefore

dressed himself up in rugs, coloured scarves, and cloaks, until he looked gigantic as well as picturesque, and sat gravely down at the window to receive the homage of the crowd. He looked impressive and received an ovation. Presently the Bey drove up, and when the people found that they had been hoaxed, there was some difficulty in getting the wild Irishman off the scene.

I quitted the Home Office on the death of Mr. Canning in 1828, when the Duke of Wellington's Ministry came into power; though Sir Robert Peel, the new Home Secretary, offered to retain me. My father, however, who managed the Duke of Norfolk's boroughs, and had been most active in the cause of Catholic Emancipation, thought it better that I should seek another sphere.

CHAPTER II

ATTACHÉ IN ROME AND PARIS

It was in the autumn of 1829 that I was appointed an Attaché of the British Embassy in Paris. The Ambassador at that time was Lord Granville, father of the late Foreign Secretary. He was a friend of my father's, and when I first set foot, as a young man of twenty, in Paris he received me most kindly. I can recall his appearance to this day. He was tall, handsome, and affable. He put a few questions to me, and then took me into the drawing-room in order to introduce me to Lady Granville. I perfectly remember what she said to me. She told me that I might consider the Embassy as my home, and added that on the despatch days, when the Messenger went to England—Mondays and Fridays—the Attachés always dined at the Embassy. Lady Granville also told me that whenever she could she would give me a place in her box at the Opéra.

One day I was on the top of a 'bus in

the Champs-Elysées with an Attaché of the Dutch Embassy, a M. Boreel, when the Ambassadress passed in her carriage. We did not think it right to take off our hats, and looked the other way. Next morning Lady Granville sent for me, and told me that she had seen us, and added that we had not behaved well, since it was a poor compliment for us to suppose that she would be ashamed of recognising us anywhere. On another occasion she saw me at the Opéra, under rather compromising circumstances, and was evidently annoyed. She told me afterwards that I should be sent back to my father in England if anything of the kind occurred again. In subsequent years I received much kindness from her son, Lord Granville, and her daughters, Lady Rivers and Lady Georgiana Fullerton, the details of whose edifying life are well known. A year later I was transferred to the Consulate at Rome, at the request of my father.

My family was connected with Cardinal Weld and Lord Shrewsbury, both of whom were in Rome, and they received me with much kindness, and in both of their dwellings I found a home. I was with Cardinal Weld at Frascati, where he spent the summer of 1830. One day

whilst I was riding with His Eminence he fell and broke his leg. I galloped across the Campagna to Rome to fetch medical assistance. On my arrival the horse fell down, perfectly exhausted, and the veterinary surgeon, who was called, began to bleed him. When he had attended to the horse he wanted to bleed me too, as he considered I was unduly excited. This was a custom in Italy in those days; but I naturally cried off, on the plea that I wished to return to Frascati without delay, which I did.

When in Rome I was introduced to the Duchesse de St. Leu (Queen Hortense) and her youngest son, Louis Napoleon, who was destined to play so great a part in the world as Emperor of the French. I frequented her receptions once a week, and often used to ride with the Prince and Lord Shrewsbury in the Borghese Gardens. One day we passed some Irish Capuchin friars, when I heard the following compliment paid me: 'Shure that young man is the most conceited puppy in all Rome,' a remark which caused a laugh at my expense. Napoleon at that time was taciturn, but amiable. He was a good horseman, and excelled in athletic pastimes, and, though short, was active and muscular.

Queen Hortense was most kind to all

foreigners. At that period I spoke very little French, and had, indeed, a better acquaintance with Italian, which I had acquired at the best of all schools—daily contact with the people. At a certain ball the ex-Queen of Holland did me the honour of telling me to dance, inquiring at the same time if I was skilled in that accomplishment. I answered, by a slip of the tongue: 'Madame, je sais danser un petit.' This produced general merriment, and henceforth the Queen spoke of me as 'L'Anglais qui sait danser un petit.'

At this period I made the acquaintance of the future Cardinal Wiseman, who was head of the English College. He was living with his mother and sister, and I saw them continually. Wiseman was then a young man, rapidly gaining a great reputation at the Church degli Incurabili on the Corso. He was a tall, slim man, of ascetic appearance, and not promising to be the very corpulent man he was in after years.

Whilst I was in Rome, Pope Pius VIII. died, and I remember the excitement of the long conclave which followed his death, and the general surprise when, after more than two months, the unexpected election of Gregory XVI. was announced. Italy, and especially the Papal States,

was then in a ferment. Events in France, which led to the Revolution of 1830 and to the overthrow of the reactionary Government of Charles X., had been followed with keen interest, not only by the inmates of the palace of Queen Hortense, but by the whole Roman people, who were agitating for a representative government. The election of Gregory XVI. was not popular, and the agitation in Rome was so great that the new Pope did not feel himself safe, and requested the help of Austria to keep peace in his capital. This appeal to foreign assistance highly incensed not only the Romans, but also the French, and the hospitable palace of Louis Napoleon's mother became neither more nor less than a nest of conspirators.

All this was rather exciting for one who could see things from the inside, and the taciturnity of the future Emperor of the French did not prevent me from ascertaining the risky rôle which he and his brother were playing in attempting, with Menotti, to foster a revolution which would have secured what they called a liberal constitution for the Papal States. When the Austrians entered Rome, Louis Napoleon and his brother had to take to flight, and, if I remember right, were condemned to death, and

a price put upon their heads by the Austrian General in the name of the Papal Government. They fled to Spoleto, and it is curious to remember that it was Mgr. Mastai, Archbishop of Spoleto, afterwards Pope Pius IX., who concealed them and had them safely conducted across the frontier. It must be said that the Austrians ruled Rome with a rod of iron, and Gregory XVI. soon found that his allies were too much inclined to pose as his masters.

The difficulties of the times did not prevent the Romans from amusing themselves, and the Carnival of 1831, in spite of revolutionary conspiracies and dark rumours, was particularly brilliant and animated. The Romans felt they were dancing on a volcano, and seemed to enjoy the fun all the more. The streets in those days were narrow and tortuous, and the one which I remember best was the long, lively, picturesque Corso, where the Carnival was held, and the extraordinary race of loose horses, covered with crackers, was run. The Carnival festivities ended by what was called the 'moccoletti,' a scuffle in which every one sought to blow out his neighbour's candle. It is impossible for me to attempt to give an adequate description of the lasting impression which Rome left on my mind.

At Rome I met frequently Lord Clifford of Chudleigh, who was the son-in-law of Cardinal Weld. This relationship was not generally understood; but the explanation is simple, for the Cardinal was a widower when he entered the priesthood. Lord Clifford was a clever but eccentric man, and he wrote me many entertaining letters. Unfortunately, when I left Rome in 1831, all the books that I had collected were packed up and sent by sea to Marseilles, but the vessel was wrecked. In this way I lost not merely my books, but my papers, and although I scarcely think the latter were of much account, yet there were letters and documents among them which at this distance of time would throw a curious light upon a particularly interesting period.

Lord Clifford had a most extraordinary servant of the name of Rock, who was quite as peculiar as his master. He knew neither Italian nor French, and always spoke with a strong Irish brogue. One day, as Cardinal Weld was getting into his carriage, an Italian in the street made obeisance to him and kissed his hand. The Cardinal turned to Rock, and asked, 'Who is this man?' He replied instantly, 'The Traitor,' meaning the *traiteur*. The Cardinal was startled, but it was quickly explained to him that Rock only meant

the owner of the restaurant from which the meals of His Eminence were sent. In after-life Rock followed Lord Clifford to England, and settled down in a cottage on his master's estate. He was a quaint-looking figure in old age, for he persisted in wearing, somewhat ostentatiously, the old scarlet stockings of Cardinal Weld.

I left Rome, as I have previously remarked, in 1831, and went to Florence by mail-phaeton, which carried the solitary passenger, the driver, and an armed guard. Our journey was swift and tranquil until we got to Aquapendente, of which the Italians say: 'Buono vino, buono pane, ma cattiva gente' ('Good wine, good bread, but wicked people'). The mail, which was drawn by four horses, broke down at this point, and was dragged for the night into the yard of a remarkably gloomy and villainous-looking inn. The aspect of the place was so forbidding, and the expression of the people in the house so sinister, that I refused the 'buono vino' and 'buono pane' that were offered me, and went supperless into a dirty bedroom to spend the night. Somehow I had a presentiment of evil, and therefore pushed the chest of drawers against the door in case any attempt was made to surprise me. After a time the door was

cautiously tried, and I immediately fired a pistol through the panels, and shouted out: 'Ancora un altro' ('There is yet another'). I heard no more until the next morning, when I got into the carriage, and the conductor of the mail said significantly to me, 'Il Signor a eu peur hier soir.'

I made no reply, but, on arriving in Florence, I laid the matter before Lord Mulgrave, the British Minister, and though a complaint was made, and official inquiries instituted, no explanation was forthcoming, for the conductor was the relative of a high family in Rome. On reaching Paris I put up at the Hôtel Mirabeau, in the Rue de la Paix, a house I afterwards often recommended to my English friends.

I now returned to the Embassy in the capacity of an unpaid Attaché, but remained there only a few months, for the Ambassador, Lord Granville, advised me, as I had no fortune, not to follow the diplomatic profession. I lived in those days on a small allowance from my father, supplemented by journalistic work in the shape of correspondence for the first railway paper, 'The Railway Chronicle,' I think, which was conducted by Mr. Watts Russell.

Even in those days I kept up my association with London, and travelled frequently between the French and the English capitals.

Nobody who has not personally experienced it can imagine the intolerable nuisances of the Channel crossing in the thirties. It was about 1828 or 1829 that I first travelled from London to Paris. The boat was met at Dover by a shoal of Custom House officers, who waylaid the wet, weary, and frequently sea-sick passengers. Examination in those days was carried to the length of bodily search. You were felt all over to see whether you had anything concealed on your person. Ladies were taken into a separate room, and underwent the same investigation at the hands of a female attendant. This operation at Dover or Calais lasted from half an hour to one hour and a half, according to the number of passengers. The crossing frequently lasted eight hours. On landing, passports were severely scrutinised, to see whether they agreed with the description of the bearer, and if there was the slightest error, you were not allowed to proceed on the journey.

I naturally became intimate, through my frequent passages, with the *douaniers*, and I remember saying to one of these officials that

I hoped to live to see his dried skin in some museum as a sign of the stupidity of former days.

Things were just as bad on the Belgian frontier. On one occasion, after being searched, I was deprived of six razors out of a week's supply of seven, as the Custom House officers declared that no man in his senses could require what is called a 'semaine.' Books were also examined and liable to seizure. I happened at the time to be reading a work on China in which it was said that China had one advantage over Europe, viz., in possessing no *douaniers*. This I showed with glee to the Belgian Customs officers.

The Military Attaché at the Embassy in those days was Major Caradoc, afterwards Lord Howden, a handsome and agreeable man, and a great favourite, in consequence, with the ladies. His name constantly occurs in the published letters of Harriet, Countess Granville, and always in a complimentary connection, for he was greatly esteemed by her, as well as by the Ambassador. Major Caradoc married the Princess Bagration, who made him, according to Lady Granville, 'a faded and death-like bride.'

I remember on one occasion dining with the Ambassador and the members of his staff at the

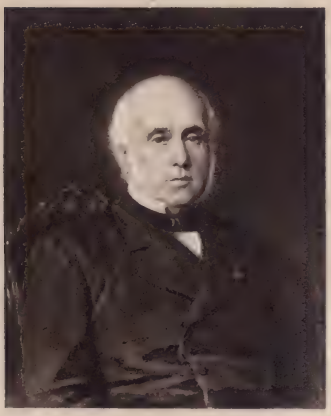
hotel of the Princess Bagration in the Faubourg St. Honoré. It was a house in which much ceremony was observed. When the Ambassador arrived, the *chasseur* who announced him, clad in gorgeous livery, gave three raps with his wand on the floor. The First Secretary was greeted with two raps, and the rest of the suite with one. I was the youngest, and came, of course, at the tail of the procession, and got none at all. At that period Ambassadors had always two footmen and a *chasseur* in green livery standing at the back of their carriages. In Rome it was a common custom for running footmen to clear the way, and at night to carry torches on either side of the carriage.

CHAPTER III

ENGLISH BANKER IN PARIS

On leaving the Embassy in 1831 I went into the firm of Callaghan & Company, at that time a well-known Paris banking-house. The reason why I joined the concern was that Messrs. Callaghan were the Paris representatives of Wright, Selby, & Company, of Henrietta Street, Covent Garden—an old-established firm of Catholic bankers in London, in which Mr. Jerningham, afterwards my brother-in-law, was a partner. I had a percentage on the profits of the new business which came to Messrs. Callaghan from Messrs. Wright & Company, and from other bankers in London. But finding that this arrangement did not work satisfactorily, I asked my father to help me, and the bank of Edward Blount, Père et Fils, was founded in the Rue Lafitte, No. 7, where I resided in the early years of my married life. It was on November 18, 1834, that I married Gertrude Frances, third daugther of the late William Charles Jerningham

1834.



1884.

Sir Edward & Lady Blount.

Esq., a union which brought me unalloyed happiness. Lady Blount died at Imberhorne on November 9, 1897—a loss upon which I cannot trust myself to speak, except to say that my grief was shared by all who knew her.

When the firm of Edward Blount, Père et Fils, was started in Paris, I found that my old friends in diplomacy and society did not desert me. Lord Henry Vane, for instance, one of the Attachés at the Embassy, who afterwards succeeded as fourth and last Duke of Cleveland, came into the bank one day and paid to a current account the sum of 11,000*l.*, saying to me: 'I shall not touch this deposit until you can afford to part with it.' Another gentleman named Motteux, a friend of my father's and a former possessor of Sandringham, paid into the bank 7,000*l.* with the same assurance. Some years afterwards I refunded the money, and neither of them would listen to the idea that I should pay them interest. My friendship with the Duke of Cleveland continued to his death. He was a most enlightened man, and of a singularly open and inquiring mind, and made a considerable figure in the House of Lords. The Earl of Shrewsbury also came to my assistance.

The business proved satisfactory, and in-

creased steadily; but after a few years we dissolved the bank, because I was asked to join forces with another banker, and in this way the firm of Charles Laffitte, Blount, & Company, Rue Basse du Rempart, was established. My new premises in Paris were exactly opposite the old Foreign Office, on the Boulevard de la Madeleine. My partner, Charles Laffitte, was nephew to Jacques Laffitte, a banker, who in 1813 was elected President of the Chamber of Commerce, and in the following year nominated Governor of the Bank of France by the Provisional Government. Napoleon I., who knew Jacques Laffitte's integrity, as well as his ability as a financier, entrusted him, after the battle of Waterloo, with the sum of five million francs. It was Laffitte who became guarantee to Blücher for the payment of the first instalment of the indemnity. He was Minister of Finance in 1830, and President of the Council in Louis Philippe's first Ministry; but he lost the bulk of his fortune in the financial panic of 1831.

My partnership with M. Charles Laffitte lasted until the Revolution of 1848, when the banking establishment we had founded was dissolved. The loss caused by the Revolution ruined me; but I have the satisfaction of being able to add

that, eventually, all the creditors of Laffitte, Blount & Company, were paid in full by me. After this reverse of fortune I was obliged to retrench all my expenses, and, in consequence, I retired to St. Germain, where I lived for several years in a small villa with my wife and young children.

As soon as public affairs grew tranquil after the establishment of the Second Empire, in the autumn of 1852, some friends of mine in France and in England offered me capital to establish a limited liability bank (*en commandite*), I being the responsible partner with half the profits. The chief promoters of this enterprise were Mr. Brassey, the great contractor, of whom I speak later, and Mr. Buddicom, the well-known engine builder, who worked at that time the locomotive power on the Paris and Rouen Railway by contract. They were joined in the project by a few Frenchmen of substance and recognised financial ability, and in this way, for the third time, my name came before France as a banker in Paris under the style of Edward Blount & Company, Rue de la Paix, No. 7. This bank lasted until after the revolution of September 4, 1870, when it was wound up and the business transferred to the Société Générale of Paris, of

which I became President, a post which I held, in spite of my advanced years, until the annual meeting of June 11, 1901, when I informed the board that I probably should not return to France, and therefore resigned my position. Six months later I received the following gratifying letter:—

Mon cher Président,—J'ai relaté au Conseil l'entretien que vous avez bien voulu m'accorder à Imberhorne et je lui ai fait connaître, comme vous m'en aviez chargé, les motifs impérieux qui vous commandaient de renoncer aux fonctions effectives de Président.

Il me charge de vous exprimer le sentiment de profond regret que lui inspire votre détermination. Tout en s'inclinant devant les considérations qui vous la dictent, le Conseil ne peut se résigner à voir la Société Générale complètement privée des lumières que vous apportiez à ses délibérations, de l'appui que vous donniez à son action et du prestige attaché à ce respect universel qui, depuis si longtemps, salue votre nom dans le monde des affaires.

Il vous demande d'accepter le titre de Président honoraire, que son vote unanime vient de vous décerner, comme un hommage de sa reconnaissance pour les inappréciables services que vous avez rendus à la Société Générale, depuis sa fondation, autant par la sagesse lumineuse de vos conseils que par votre haute influence et vos relations.

Notre Personnel, à qui cette décision sera notifiée par un ordre de service dont nous aurons l'honneur de vous donner connaissance, sera heureux de garder une attache avec celui dont

la paternelle bienveillance lui met au cœur un sentiment de si affectueuse vénération; notre clientèle et nos relations verront s'affirmer, au grand profit du renom de la Société Générale, l'indestructible lien qui l'unit à celui de ses fondateurs qui a été pour elle, pendant si longtemps et à travers tant de vicissitudes, le guide le plus sûr, le plus éclairé et le plus vaillant, et le Conseil lui-même, en se félicitant que votre Présidence honoraire lui permette de recourir encore à vos avis et à vos conseils, conserve l'espoir que vous pourrez quelquefois les lui apporter en personne et présider effectivement quelques unes de ses séances.

M'associant personnellement aux sentiments que je vous exprime en son nom, je vous prie, mon cher Président, d'agréer l'hommage de ma reconnaissance et de mon très affectueux dévouement.

Louis Dorizon.

In London I have always been connected with some of the largest companies in the City. On my first arrival in the Metropolis as a youth I was placed, as I have already remarked, as a clerk in the Provincial Bank of Ireland. When the General Credit and Finance Company, Lothbury, was founded in May, 1863, I became one of the first directors, the late Mr. Samuel Laing, M.P., being chairman. Among the directors was also Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, the diplomatist, just returned from the Embassy at Madrid.

This company was absorbed twenty-two years later by the Union Discount Company in Cornhill, of which I am still a director, and which in financial circles in England, on the Continent, and in America, holds a prominent position. I am also a director of the London Joint-Stock Bank, Limited, and have also been intimately associated in the City, chiefly as the representative in London of the Société Générale of Paris, with the heads of the chief banking and financial houses.

CHAPTER IV

THE BEGINNINGS OF FRENCH RAILWAYS

It was through my financial position as banker that I was able to help the French Government to make a new departure. In England, in the closing years of the reign of William IV., the railway movement, which has since produced a social revolution, was beginning to claim the attention of capitalists. But in France it attracted curiously little attention. This will be seen at a glance from the fact that in 1836 there were already nearly two thousand miles of railroad in England, whilst France in that year had only one short line between Strasburg and Bale—then both in French territory—a line, so far as I can remember, about twenty-five miles in length. The first line constructed on the English model was the railway from Paris to St. Germain, about twelve miles and a half in length, which was destined to become the germ not merely of the Western of France line, but of the entire railway system of Normandy and

Brittany, and of the whole of the sea-coast of North-west France.

In 1838 the French Government brought forward a Bill for the construction of seven great trunk-lines under the control of the State. Unfortunately, this Bill was defeated by 196 to 69, for the prejudice against railways was at that time very great on the Continent. As national subventions were impossible, the door was thrown open to private enterprise; and it was at this juncture that I went to M. Dufaure, then Minister of Public Works, a famous advocate and influential statesman, who acted frequently as arbitrator in the most difficult affairs. Knowing him intimately, I said to him: 'Are you willing that I should find in England the necessary money for the making of a line from Paris to Rouen?' M. Dufaure, who took a more sanguine view of the enterprise than his friend M. Thiers, promised that if I would find 600,000*l.* (15,000,000 francs) in England, and as much in France, he would give a guarantee for a third 600,000*l.* I at once went over to England, proceeded first to London, then to Liverpool, and next to Manchester, and returned promptly with the 600,000*l.* This success gave courage to French capitalists, and I had the

gratification of seeing them quickly subscribe 600,000*l.* more.

I received much assistance in raising the money, as far as London was concerned, from Mr. William Chaplin, the great coach proprietor, of the firm of Chaplin & Horne, who afterwards became the head of the English board of directors. The Direction was half French and half English. Mr. Chaplin was then chairman of the Southampton Railway, and 'horsed' the greater portion of the English mails and stage-coaches. He began life as a postboy, and rose to be Sheriff of London. He was intimate in his closing years with the Duke of Wellington, and lived in the neighbourhood of Strathfieldsaye.

Another of the founders was Mr. Moss, the well-known banker at Liverpool, and founder and director of the then Grand Junction Railway, which existed before the line was made from London to Birmingham. Amongst the English directors were Mr. Laurence, Mayor of Liverpool, and Sir John Easthope, M.P., editor and proprietor of the 'Morning Chronicle.' In addition to these there were eight French directors, amongst whom were M. Denis Benoist, Comte de Kersaint, and others whose names I regret my memory no longer recalls.

Some of my readers may be interested in the actual text of the law which authorised the establishment of a railway from Paris to Rouen.

At the Palace of the Tuileries, July 15, 1840.

Louis Philippe, King of the French, to all present and to come, Greeting: We have proposed, the Chambers have adopted, and we command the following:—

Article 1. The offer made by Messrs. Charles Laffitte, Edward Blount, & Company, to contract for the building, at their own expense, risks, and perils, of a railroad from Paris to Rouen, is accepted. In consequence, all the clauses and conditions of the agreement approved on the 22nd of May, 1840, by the Secretary of State of Public Works, and accepted on the 23rd of May by the said gentlemen, Charles Laffitte, Edward Blount, & Company, will receive their full and entire execution.

Article 2. The Minister of Public Works is authorised to grant, in the name of the State, to the Paris and Rouen Railway Company, the loan of fourteen million (14,000,000) francs. This sum shall be exclusively employed for the works of the railway, and for the purchase and construction of the material necessary for the working thereof.

Article 3. The said sum of fourteen million francs shall not be spent until a further sum of thirty-six million has been realised and appropriated by the contractors; payments will be made weekly, in proportion to the extent of the

execution of new works and of new expenses, for sums in proportion to the work certified for.

Article 4. The rate of interest shall be fixed at 3 per cent. per annum. The reimbursement shall be effected by yearly payments, but will not commence until three years after the time fixed for the completion of the railway.

Article 5. The Company shall appropriate to the payment of interest and to reimbursement the sum borrowed for the railway and its dependencies, including the working material, according to the progress of each period of the enterprise. In case the Company delay the payments stipulated, the Government, independently of the right conferred upon them in the preceding Article, shall have power to appropriate the revenues or other property of the Company.

Article 6. In case another company should ultimately offer to carry out at its own expense the extension of the Paris and Rouen line of railway to Havre, as in the case of an extension carried out at the expense of the State, the Paris and Rouen Railway Company shall agree to build on the basis of common profit and expense the part comprised between the junction of the Paris and Rouen line and the limit of the Commune of Rouen towards Deville, so that the two lines may form one without a break of continuity. In this case the Minister of Public Works shall be authorised to consent, in the name of the State, to a supplementary loan to the Company of four million francs. This loan will take place under the conditions of Articles 4 and 5 regulating the loan of fourteen million francs.

Article 7. Any subsidiary agreements between the State and the Company which may be required for the full execution of the present law shall be regulated by royal decree. The present conventions are subject to the maintenance of the full rights of the State over the railway, its dependencies, and the working material. The registration of mortgages of the railway will be made in the name of the Judiciary Agent of the Treasury.

Article 8. These instruments, in virtue of the present law, will be registered at the fixed price of one franc.

Article 9. The grantees shall not have the power to issue stock, bonds, or debentures for meeting the expenses of the construction of the line from Paris to Rouen before being constituted a joint-stock company, duly authorised under Article 37 of the Code of Commerce.

Article 10. By-laws, in the form of *Règlements d'Administration Publique*, will be issued, after agreement between the Government and the Company, to determine the measures and provide for the arrangements necessary for the policing, safety, use, and preservation of the railway and of the works connected with it. The expenses which the execution of these measures will involve will be defrayed by the grantees. The grantees will be authorised to make, with the approval of the Administration, the by-laws which they may consider useful for the working of the railway.

Article 11. Provision for the expenditure authorised by the present law shall be made from the extraordinary resources forming the second

part of the Budget of the Minister of Public Works.

Article 12. The present law, discussed and adopted by the Chambers of Peers and of Deputies, and sanctioned by us this day, shall be executed as a law of the State. We give the order to our Courts and to our Tribunals, Prefects, and Administrative Bodies, that they keep and maintain, cause to be kept, observed, and maintained, these presents, and, in order to give notice of them all, that they have them published and registered wherever necessary; and that this may be firm and stable for ever we have hereunto placed our Seal.

Given at the Palace of the Tuileries, July 15, 1840.

(Signed) LOUIS PHILIPPE:
By the King,
The Secretary of State for Public Works:
(Signed) CTE. JAUBERT.

Witnessed and sealed with the Great Seal:
The Keeper of the Seals of France, Secretary of State for the Department of Justice and Religion.
(Signed) VIVIEN.

As this was an entirely new departure in France, the English directors stipulated that, as they already had some experience in the construction of railways, and as they found one-third of the capital, the rest being found by the

French, with the pecuniary assistance of MM. Jacques Laffitte et Cie., bankers (the head of the firm being Minister of Finance under Louis Philippe), the appointment of an engineer should rest with themselves. This suggestion met with no opposition, and Mr. Joseph Locke was appointed to carry out the undertaking. It was the intention at first to employ French contractors, but their estimates proved so extravagant that Mr. Locke advised the board to get English contractors to tender for the work. This brought, amongst others, Mr. Brassey and Mr. Mackenzie, who was then associated with Mr. Brassey, upon the scene, and as they tendered lower they received the contract.

Shortly afterwards I laid the foundation-stone of the first railway bridge over the Seine at Paris. I was accompanied by four or five men—Brassey's workmen—one of whom was Milroy, a ganger, and a man of over six feet in height, who looked a giant by the side of the Frenchmen. English and French workmen were found to work fairly well together, but the fact that they could not understand each other sometimes led to difficulties. When the bridge at Maisons, near Paris, was commenced, an English workman and some Frenchmen were set to work to

make the foundations; in about an hour, a Frenchman came up and said that he would not stay any longer down there with a man who did not understand a word he spoke. On this it was remarked that when the Frenchmen got together at work they talked of nothing but their newspapers and their politics.

During the construction of the Paris-Rouen line, I again had recourse to my fellow-countrymen, and undertook on behalf of the concessionaries to find the necessary funds for the extension of the St. Germain line, and had the satisfaction of raising the money.

M. De Witte states that his grandfather, M. Guizot, the eminent statesman, had not the same prejudices against railways which M. Thiers manifested when they were first introduced into France, in the late thirties. M. Guizot, who represented Lisieux, was, in fact, for some days the depositary of a sum of 400,000*l.* entrusted to him by the Company to pay for the land in his Department—viz., the Eure—through which the railway was to pass. He had the confidence of the owners, and this course was adopted to avoid the delays attending legal expropriation. About the same time that a concession was granted for the Paris-Rouen line—viz., in

July 1840—the company for the construction of the Paris-Orleans line obtained a subvention from the French Government, which was beginning to see the necessity of railways. Operations were at once commenced, and from that time forward they never ceased.

The beginnings of the Paris-Rouen line were not easy, and we had to contend with other difficulties besides those attending the opening up of the country. The concession had hardly been secured when, in this same month of July 1840, the Syrian war broke out. Feeling ran high in England and in France, and an incident happened which might have had serious results. The directors of the Paris and Rouen Railway had opened a credit authorising me to draw largely upon Messrs. Stone, Martin, & Company, the bankers of the company, and I had negotiated the bills in Paris. To my astonishment, Messrs. Stone, Martin, & Company refused to accept them, and they took up this attitude in consequence of orders received from the English board of directors of the Paris and Rouen Railway, the outcome of panic in regard to the war. In this emergency I called upon Jones Lloyd, the great London bankers of that epoch, who at once offered to take up the bills for me, as they

felt that the action of the railway authorities was wrong.

Notwithstanding difficulties, the railway from Paris to Rouen was opened on May 9, 1843. I had a concession, together with M. Charles Laffitte, in the construction in 1845 of the line from Amiens to Boulogne, by way of Abbeville and Neufchatel. Subsequently, in 1852-53, I was interested as Director-Administrator in the line from Lyons to Avignon, and also in that between Lyons, Mâcon, and Geneva. I practically financed the Western of France Railway. I was chairman of the line for thirty years, and relinquished my position only in 1894, in consequence of the opposition shown to any Englishman holding an important post in a State-aided railway at a time of political tension. The reason assigned for the clamour for my retirement was that the railway was closely associated with the War Office in the mobilisation and movements of the army, and it was urged that the position was therefore untenable to a foreigner.

The immediate cause of my retirement was rather curious. In the course of one of the speeches which I made at the British Chamber of Commerce, in reply to the Ambassador, Lord

Dufferin, who proposed my health as chairman, I used the following words:

After the eloquent and magnificent speech of Lord Dufferin, I have only to thank him from the bottom of my heart in the name of the Chamber of Commerce. This last year—I am now speaking as a commercial man—has not been a very happy one for us, and it is a consolation for us to see that we have an Ambassador who appreciates the work of the Chamber of Commerce. I have said the past year has not been a very satisfactory one, but there has been at least one gratifying incident—the conduct of our countrymen in Matabeleland. It has shown us that British pluck still exists. Those men have given us a magnificent example of devotion and courage, and I pity those who say anything against them. It is said of Sir Edward Blount that he is an old Jingo. All I can say is that if her Majesty were to found the Order of the Jingo, I should ask to be a Commander of it; and I feel sure it is the sentiment of every Englishman in this room that he would be also a member of the Order, for the old spirit still exists, and will do more than any number of ships to carry us through our difficulties.

These words, uttered more in jest than with any serious purpose, gave rise to a terrible storm, both in the French press and in the Chamber of Deputies, thanks to a garbled account which ridiculously distorted the truth. In the course

of a discussion on the mobilisation question, during which I was represented as a standing danger to the safety of France, owing to my British nationality, M. de Mahy spoke as follows:—

M. DE MAHY. Dans une réunion tenue récemment à Paris, réunion d'une certaine solennité où Monsieur Blount avait été convié avec un certain nombre de ses compatriotes de haute volée et très honorables comme lui, on a parlé des choses d'Angleterre et des choses de France; puis on a porté un toast à cet homme considérable et distingué, dans lequel on lui souhaitait encore de longs jours en le félicitant du rôle rempli par lui en France au profit de l'Angleterre.

M. HUBBARD. Une pareille situation ne devrait pas être tolérée 24 heures.

M. DE MAHY. Il a répondu . . . et c'est ici que je sollicite un démenti. Le gouvernement est sans doute au courant de ce fait; il me dira si je me trompe. . . .

M. LOUIS BRUNET. Un témoin auriculaire nous a affirmé le fait.

M. DE MAHY. Monsieur Blount a répondu en ces termes.

'Oui, j'accepte le toast qui m'est porté. Je crois, dans ma longue carrière dévouée à mon pays, l'avoir mérité, et vous, mes compatriotes qui êtes ici, quand vous retournerez dans quelques jours à Londres, vous direz à Sa Gracieuse Majesté que je suis un Anglais fidèle, que je suis ce qu'on appelle en France un Chauvin, et en Angleterre un Jingoist, et que jusqu'à mon

dernier jour, je resterai un Jingoist, c'est-à-dire un partisan passionné de la prépondérance anglaise.'

C'est ce partisan de la prépondérance anglaise qui tient une partie de notre mobilisation dans ses mains. (Mouvements.)

Il a continué son toast en ajoutant : 'Vous direz à Sa Majesté que j'ai un fils et un petit-fils et qu'ils sont ici à son service.' Je trouve ce langage très beau et très noble. Cet Anglais, qui tient dans sa main une partie de notre mobilisation, a bien fait de parler ainsi : il est bon Anglais : il fait son métier d'Anglais. Je vous demande à votre tour de faire votre métier de Français. (Vifs applaudissements.)

The French press took the matter up, and seems to have gone through all the dictionaries to find out what the word 'Jingo' meant. Under the inspiration of patriot extremists, a campaign was started against me, which led to the introduction of a Bill for the alteration of the relations between the State and the railway companies, and for strengthening the control of the Government over the railways. General Mercier, who was then Minister for War, was strongly in favour of such a measure, and was understood to have practically forced the question of my expulsion upon the Government.

The following extract from an article which appeared in the 'Standard' at the time, contains

an accurate report of what happened, and shows the feeling which prevailed in the matter:—

In the course of a sitting of the Chamber of Deputies, M. de Mahy, member for La Réunion, and former Minister of Marine, denounced as a public danger the fact that Sir E. Blount, the universally respected doyen of the British community in Paris, was chairman of the Board of Directors of the Ouest Railway Company. Sir E. Blount, as the chairman of the Railway Company, must, he said, perforce have access to the plans of mobilisation, and as he was a loyal subject of her Majesty it was not consistent with the safety of the country that he should be allowed to hold that position. The Government, in reply, paid a deserved tribute to Sir E. Blount for the services he had rendered France during the sixty years he has resided in the country; and the subject dropped.

Subsequently the Ouest Board of Directors held a meeting, at which the question of Sir E. Blount's nationality disqualifying him for the post was raised, but his colleagues showed their sense of that imputation by unanimously re-electing him. About a fortnight ago, however, a functionary from the War Office called at the offices of the Ouest Company, and intimated to one of the high officials there that Sir E. Blount's re-election as chairman was a source of embarrassment to the Government, and that, to prevent inconvenient interpellations when the Chamber met, his resignation of the post would be very acceptable. The Minister of War and M. Casimir-Périer were appealed to by the high officials of the Railway Company, and the

Minister of War entertained such a sense of the danger of impending interpellations, that we understand he stated that if Sir E. Blount did not resign within four days he would bring in a Bill excluding him and all foreigners from the chairmanship of French Railway Companies, and M. Casimir-Périer, while expressing his personal regards for Sir Edward Blount, virtually backed up General Mercier.

Sir E. Blount placed himself in the hands of his brother directors, who accepted his resignation of the chairmanship, and immediately elected one of themselves, M. Delarbre, to fill his place. At the same time they elected Sir Edward Blount as Honorary President, but he declined to accept this empty honour. He remains a director of the company, having been elected by the shareholders, who alone have power to displace him.

This ostracism of a gentleman in his eighty-fourth year, who has spent the whole of his life in France, and has done her signal service, has caused a most painful feeling throughout the English Colony, and in French society generally. Sir E. Blount has been Chairman of the Ouest Railway Company for over thirty years. During the siege he did signal service to France, and his efforts were materially conducive to the re-victualling of Paris when the great city had reached starvation point. In 1848, when the terrible insurrection broke out, at the risk of his life he rode from Paris to Amiens on an engine—to secure which he had many narrow escapes—to convey despatches from General Cavaignac ordering troops to come up to Paris, and organised the transport that brought them

within twenty-four hours to the gates of the city.

We hear that Sir E. Blount's compulsory resignation will not by any means settle the question, or stave the dreaded interpellation. The revolutionary 'Lanterne' points out that Sir E. Blount is a vice-chairman of the Paris, Lyons, and Mediterranean Railway Company, and argues that a law be passed to hunt him out of this position. If such measures are taken against a man who has sacrificed his life to promote French interests, it is not likely that toleration or fair play will be shown to Englishmen engaged in business here who have none of the claims which Sir E. Blount admittedly possesses to the gratitude of France.

I could have declined to accept this summons to quit in less than a week, as I did not hold my position from the Government, but from the directors, who in the thick of the crisis had reiterated their expression of confidence in me by unanimously re-electing me Chairman, in spite of the threatening storm; but on reading the 'projet de loi,' I found there was a clause in it which stated that for the future all railway directors must be approved by the Government upon their election, or re-election on retirement by rotation. Now, many of my colleagues were partisans of other *régimes*—Imperialists, Orleanists, &c.—and there was no doubt that they

would have lost their positions, which to many of them would have been nearly ruin, as, although most distinguished men, some of them were dependent to a large degree for their livelihood upon their fees as directors of the railway.

The Minister of War (General Mercier) and M. Casimir-Périer were appealed to by the high officials of the railway; but the former stated that if I did not resign he would introduce a Bill specifically excluding on political grounds all foreigners from the chairmanship of French railway companies. I therefore felt it incumbent upon me to place my resignation in the hands of my colleagues, who in recognition of my services appointed me Honorary President. I am now the sole survivor of the original railway promoters in France, and take to this day a keen interest in all that concerns the development of railway enterprise in that country.

CHAPTER V

MY RAILWAY CAREER IN FRANCE

Some of my experiences with railways in France seem to me to be worth recording here. They may not amount to much in themselves, but may be found helpful in giving an idea of a period which few people of the present day, even French people, can thoroughly realise.

At the commencement of my railroad career, in the reign of William IV., I considered it necessary to learn the practical working and management of railway traffic from start to finish. Accordingly, I set myself to learn engine-driving. The London and North-Western Railway (which at that time only went from London to Birmingham) kindly allowed me to mount their locomotives, and for four months I acted first as a supernumerary, then as a fireman, and the last month as driver, with an experienced stoker, or mate, as they were then called.

When the railway between Paris and Rouen was opened all the engine-drivers were English-

men—as the Locomotive Manager, Mr. Buddicom, whose name will frequently come under my pen in the course of this narrative, had enlisted some fifty of them from the works of the London and North-Western Railway at Liverpool for service in France—and I used often to accompany them on the engine, generally as driver. This gave me much personal influence, not merely with the engine-drivers themselves, but with other work-people along the line; for no one can gain power, it seems to me, over the industrial classes unless he thoroughly understands himself the practical details of the trade of the men he seeks to govern. I had many accidents, and still bear the marks of more than one physical mishap.

I regret to say that, when driving, I unfortunately had three or four accidents attended with fatal results. One of my first victims was a policeman, who had deliberately seated himself on a chair in front of the advancing train, with the intention, as we afterwards learnt, of committing suicide because of some love disappointment. It was at the station at Triel, near Paris, on a Sunday night, and there were a large number of passengers on the platform waiting for the train. It was twilight, and neither myself nor the man with me on the engine saw the man until it was

too late. We did all we could to save him, reversing steam and putting on brakes; but at that time we had nothing but hand-brakes, and it was impossible to pull up in time. The passengers waiting for the train saw the man killed before their eyes, and they displayed great irritation against me, saying that I ought to have stopped, little knowing that that was impossible.

At the present moment, with the electric brakes, we could have saved the man, for I have myself seen a train stopped with such means in fifty mètres, though this causes a disagreeable shock to the passengers. Not long ago, on the road to Trouville for the races, an engine-driver saw a child on the track, and applied his electric brake instantly, with the result that some of the passengers—I myself being one—were thrown into the arms of those opposite. Complaints were freely made at the moment; but after inquiry even the grumblers were of opinion that it was much better that they should be shaken than that a child should be killed.

In former times, diligences, going to places in proximity to the railway, were fastened on trucks in Paris, and the passengers travelling to such outlying spots made the journey by rail in

them, and the diligence was transferred to its wheels at the station to which it was going. Once, when I was on the engine, driving, we came round a sharp curve at Bonnières at a moderate speed, and saw at the station a diligence mounted on a truck at the turnplates. There was no possibility of stopping, and the diligence was upset, two or three passengers being killed. Nor was this all, for one poor fellow, who had been thrown out of the diligence by the shock and was unhurt, ran along the line to pick up his hat, and was instantly killed by a train which came from the opposite direction. A third accident, which I remember only too well, occurred to a man who was pointing the brickwork on a bridge on the Boulogne and Amiens line. He was kneeling across the rails, absorbed in his work, and, in spite of all our whistling, we could not make him hear, and both his legs were cut off.

A most touching and pathetic incident happened when I was on an engine at Meulan. We suddenly saw a small child toddling leisurely across the line. The engine-driver wanted, according to regulations, to whistle ; but I refused to allow him, for I was convinced that if he did the child would have stopped. As it

was, we held our breath and went forward, and, though we touched her frock, the child was saved. I must say that the suspense was terrible in the few seconds that intervened between sighting the child and passing the spot. When the crisis was over, the engine-driver, Tom Yates, a big, powerful fellow, who had driven many years in England, fell down fainting in the coal. When he got up he said to me: 'I have in my time run over men, but I never felt anything like the anxiety of the moment through which we have just passed.'

I remember once, on the road between Boulogne and Amiens, soon after the line had been opened and when it was in bad condition, we ran off the rails at the top of the embankment. Nobody who has not been through such an experience can have any idea of what it means. The locomotive was turned topsy-turvy. When we had got a little over the first shock, the driver, Elliott, said to me: 'Are you all right, Mr. Blount?' I said: 'Yes, I think I am.' He replied: 'I've a broken arm.' But in a few minutes, on the principle that a tragedy is always accompanied by a comedy, the fireman, an English lad, cried out: 'I'm killed;' and I could not help answering: 'No, you are not, or

you would not be howling so loud.' The carriages, fortunately, did not leave the lines.

The narrow escapes which I have had, or seen others have, in the course of my railway career, have been many. Once, going round a curve at Poissy, the fireman, climbing round to grease his engine, fell off it. We pulled up dreading the worst, and found him running after the train, shouting: 'Don't leave me behind.' On another occasion a railway policeman, coming straight out of his box, was struck by a carriage door which had carelessly been left open. He was knocked head over heels over a high embankment, and turned as many somersaults as an acrobat. We picked him up, and to our amazement he seemed little the worse for his adventure.

There are very few men now living, in any position of life, who can recall the early days of railways in France. One of the few is Mr. Henry Dove, an engine-driver, whom I have known for nearly sixty years. He began life as an office-boy to Robert Stephenson, the engineer, in 1837, and was in his employment whilst the London and Birmingham Railway was being constructed. As a youth he went into the office at Tamworth of Robert Stephenson's

brother-in-law, who was a civil engineer, and engaged at that time on the works of the Birmingham and Derby Railway. The locomotive fascinated young Dove, and he determined to get among the engines. Accordingly, in 1839 he went as a mechanic to the Romford locomotive workshops, on the old Eastern Counties Railway. The line was then open to Brentwood, and the road to Colchester was under construction; young Dove worked at the fitting until 1842, when, to his great delight, he was promoted to the position of fireman. In the following year he was sent to France to help to run one of the locomotives on the Paris and Rouen line. At my request he has jotted down some of his experiences, which my readers may find interesting. It may be as well to allow him to speak for himself.

After my arrival in Paris, I went to see Mr. Buddicom. He at once put me with a good old engineman of the name of John English, who had been employed on the Saint-Germain line at its opening. Mr. Blount (now Sir Edward) used to ride very often with us. He was a great favourite with us all. As soon as we used to see him coming along the platform towards the engine, we used to sweep our footboards clean from dust, and wipe the sides and front of the engine, so that he should not get any oil or dirt

on his clothes. We did not do this for any one else but Mr. Buddicom. Our engines were not covered in as now; but that did not keep Mr. Blount off, as, summer or winter, he was often to be seen with us. We were always glad to see him. As a rule enginemen do not like to have people on their engines, as they are always getting in the way; but Mr. Blount and Mr. Buddicom would always make room and pass on one side when we had to put into the fire-box a fresh supply of coke.

At that time (February 1845) I was sent to Motteville to drive No. 12 engine, to ballast the new line from Rouen to Havre. I remained until early in 1846, when I was taken away to make room for J. Stanley, who had had an accident at the Bonnières curve and killed an aged woman who was in a diligence. After his accident Stanley was no longer allowed to run on the Paris line, so they sent him in my place, and I went to Paris. Mr. George Britton was our foreman then in Paris. Before the accident occurred, the directors used to give us a dinner every year at a restaurant in the Avenue de Clichy. Mr. Blount always used to come after dinner and say a few kind words to us. I was driving on the Paris-Rouen line until September 1846.

In the month of May, 1847, the Minister of Public Works and some engineers, accompanied by M. Seperier, the manager, had a special train to Havre to see the line and works. I was to take the train back to Paris. A short time before starting, M. Seperier went to Mr. Buddicom, who was in the works with the Minister and others, and asked him who was to be in

charge of the engine on the way to Paris. He said, 'Dove.' M. Seperier replied, 'Not that boy on the engine?' Mr. Buddicom said, 'You want to arrive at Paris at 5.30, and you will arrive at that time, and safely. That is all you desire, I expect, and that I am sure you will have.' We were due in Paris in three hours and twenty minutes, which was then considered very good. All went well until we arrived at about where now stands the Mantes depôt. The platelayers had got their small truck on the line, and no signal out, as they did not expect this train. I reversed my engine and stopped the brakes, and pulled up about thirty yards from them. Every one was pleased, especially the poor men. We were detained about fifteen minutes whilst they got the truck off the line. After giving my passengers fifteen minutes for refreshments at Mantes, where there was a buffet, we arrived in Paris five minutes before time. As the Minister and his friends passed by the engine and 'the boy,' they said I had done very well, and they would write to Mr. Buddicom. They did so, and a few days afterwards sent me 100 francs and 50 francs for the fireman.

I remember in 1847 taking, in a special train from Rouen to the Havre Regatta, the Préfet and some of his friends, accompanied by Mr. Buddicom. In the evening, as we were leaving Havre on the return journey, I had been waiting about ten minutes at the head of the train, and by so doing had got some condensed water in my cylinders, and was just going to start. The Préfet and two or three of his friends came on to the engine in evening-dress, as it was very warm. Mr. Buddicom did not like their coming

on, as they took up all the room. I started very slow, so as not to fling the condensed water out, as going up the chimney makes it black. Mr. Buddicom, who was standing behind me, said in English, 'Let them have it, Harry; I do not mind myself.' When he saw me open my regulation valve farther, he held down his head, as the engine sent the black water all over their faces and shirt-fronts. I could only just keep from laughing, as they did not know what to make of it. Mr. Buddicom told them something in French which satisfied them, and they all got off at the first station, to our delight, as we had now room to move. They thought it was a natural state of affairs, as we all had some marks, including Mr. Buddicom himself.

At the end of 1847, I used to run some days to Paris and some days to Havre, and early in February 1848 Mr. Buddicom told the foreman that, if I went into Paris, I should take an opportunity of walking about to hear what folks had to say about the Reform Dinner, which was shortly to take place. The Ministry had refused authorisation for this dinner, and the agitation caused by this refusal led to the Revolution of 1848 and to the fall of Louis Philippe.

I went into a little shop opposite our Ambassador's, where the little English church was. I met the clerk, a tall man; I forget his name. He said, 'It will take place, sure, and perhaps there will be a few broken heads. It will end in that.' He was wrong. I went on the boulevards in the afternoon of the 23rd, and saw the soldiers who were placed in the garden of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, which was then nearly opposite where the Grand Hotel is

now. They fired on the people. I saw some fall, and the demonstrators carried the victims on their shoulders and called out for the head of Guizot. When I got to Motteville, at 7 o'clock, Mr. Buddicom was waiting for news. He said: 'What news, Harry?' I told him. He said: 'You are a very foolish fellow to go into the streets at such a time.' I have thought so since, but did not then.

The next morning I had to get out of my bed at 2 o'clock, as Mr. Buddicom wanted me at once. They had got my engine on the main line ready for me, already oiled, and the lamps lit, and Mr. Buddicom was there with the Préfet, and they told me to stop at Barentin and every station after. They called up the station-masters, and ordered the lamps to be lighted and kept alight. M. Ferot was the Préfet; he gave the orders at the stations, and told me that Louis Philippe had left Paris, and was making for Havre, and he could see the stations if he wanted to put up for a short time. I was sent because I knew the line well, and they wanted to get there as soon as possible. This we did. They were not sure which road the King would take. It was a precaution in case of need. I got back to Rouen at about 10 o'clock, and left with the 3 o'clock on February 24 for Paris; but I never arrived there with it, as after leaving Maisons the line was covered with people, and when we passed over the bridges at Bezons they were set on fire by the boatmen.

When we got to Colombes Junction, they said that a train had not long gone before us, with Sir Edward Blount on the engine, and the bridge at Asnières was burning, but they went

over it and arrived in Paris all right. We found that we could go no further. It was a dreadful night, rainy and windy, and we could see four bridges on fire from where we were—Bezons, Pontoise, Asnières, and one close to Le Pecq on the Saint-Germain line. We were very near the centre of the four fires. Two days later we found our way to Vernon on foot. To our surprise we found an engine from Rouen, coming to see if the line was in order, and we gave them news of the other part of the line, and we were able to get home in the night. We found that nearly all our enginemen, with their families, had fled to England. Mr. Buddicom asked me all about our trip, and then said: 'Are you going to run off like the others, or stop with me and take your chance like myself?' I said that it was no use to go now, after what I had gone through. I should stop, as it could not be worse than it had been. He said he was pleased that some would stop with him. We had a good time for a couple of months—not much to do until the bridges were repaired.

In the summer of 1848 I ran five or six trains of deported insurgents. We took them in at Amiens. They were tied in threes, with two gendarmes on each seat. They were heavy trains to run. I always got to Barentin station up to time; and after we had taken in water and got the engine in order to start, the fireman and myself used to take the poor fellows water in our canvas buckets, until they all had had some. They were very thankful, and we were pleased to do a good action. We used to see them get out of the train at Havre. Most of them thanked us as they passed the engine. Some looked

about sixteen years old, and some sixty. Many were respectably dressed and had carpet-bags.

In 1848 I had 5,000 francs in Sir Edward Blount's bank, then in the Rue Basse du Rempart, No. 48A, close to the Madeleine. I received a letter from Sir Edward kindly telling me to come and take it out, or he would send it for me to England. Our trains only ran to Maisons, as the bridges were not repaired, and there was a service of diligences to and from Paris, to meet the trains, about three each day. I went to get my money, and did not think of taking a carpet-bag to put it in, so the clerk asked me what I had to put it in, as they had no bags. I therefore took off my shawl from round my neck, and the money was counted into it. It was all in silver, five-franc pieces. I tied it up and took it on my shoulder, and took the diligence back to Maisons and train to Rouen. I had to carry it to Motteville, two miles, and did not lose any of it, though I should not like to do the same thing now, as I am afraid I should be robbed.

I was sent up to Paris in 1849 to run a special train to Havre, at the time when General Cavaignac was putting down a riot. I was kept there three or four days waiting, as they did not like leaving Paris. I was at Austin's Hotel, and, with an American who was stopping there also, put on a blouse and a cap and walked about Paris to see what was going on. Although there were barricades in the streets, ball-rooms in some quarters were open and dancing going on.

When Mr. Buddicom gave up his position in 1860, I was retained by the French direction and my salary raised to 1,800 francs a year.

I remained at Rouen up to 1870. On December 5, the Germans arrived in the town, and the same morning we received orders to send all the rolling-stock away to Cherbourg. Everything that was on wheels had to go, and all the *employés* of the depôt and station, with their families, fled at the same time. As you may imagine, every one seemed to lose his head, some giving orders one way and some another. M. Baumal, the superintendent, gave orders, but got confused by giving his orders to some one who did not carry them out. As no station-master could be found—he was packing up his treasures, and his wife was going with them—M. Maréchal told M. Baumal to remain and leave the matter to Dove. 'He will get us everything away;' so I filled the place of station-master and chef de dépôt. As soon as I got a train formed and the families in it and sent off, I set about getting another ready. I sent fifty-two trains away between 7 o'clock A.M. and 1 P.M. Some of the trains consisted of coal waggons, dead engines, goods waggons, and carriages.

I stopped in France until 1880. I never had a day's illness all the time I was in the country, or since, which I am very thankful for. In this respect I can say more than a good many. During all the time I was an engine-driver I never hurt the hair of any one's head, nor was I hurt in any way myself. I am proud of this, because travelling was rough in those days, and half the men were not accustomed to railway work, and had to pick it up by experience.

A curious reminiscence of what I may call

the English origin of French railways is conveyed by the fact that, contrary to the French rule of the road, which is for one to take one's right, trains on the railways take their left, as in England. The first builders of railways in France being English, and nearly all the drivers and even train-men, for many years, being also English, these pioneers naturally followed the rules they had learned in England, and taught them to their French successors.

On French railways the smaller level crossings are kept by the wives of the platelayers, and I am bound to say that, as a rule, they show themselves more alive to the responsibility of the work than the majority of the men. I remember quite well an instance in point. A light engine was going on the wrong line on the Western Railway. A woman at a level crossing at once saw the danger, but could not catch the attention of the engine-driver, and, in desperation, as the locomotive came opposite to her, she whipped off her sabot and flung it at the driver's head, which effectually stopped him, and at the same time prevented an accident. The pay of these women is 50 francs (2*l.*) a month, but on such an occasion as the above a reward is always given of the same amount. In some

stations, where the traffic is small, women keep the booking-offices and are in charge. If, for any reason, there should be any run on the station, they call the workmen from the fields. These women are called by the public 'Des altesses.' This comes from a play upon words, for the class of station kept by women is called 'Haltes.'

I need not say that the management of the workpeople was not always plain sailing; though, with rare exceptions, my experience is that mechanics both in France and England are quite amenable to reason, and easily managed with a little tact. Once, on the Paris-Rouen Railway, there was a strike of two thousand men, and the situation became critical. I went to the workshops, and, after a conversation with the leaders, posted up a notice to the effect that if any man failed to resume work by 10.30 that morning—it was then 9 o'clock—he would be dismissed. The result was that, with the exception of one hundred, they went in at once, and in the course of the day the defiant minority was reduced to thirty. I called this little gang of malcontents before me, and said that the directors did not wish that their wives should starve because of their obstinacy, and therefore

we proposed to give the women a hundred francs each, so that they might not suffer. The thirty men were then dismissed—and they were not at all desirable men to keep. I know that this system of dealing with disaffection would scarcely be possible in England; but it must not be forgotten that the characteristics of the two races differ in small matters as well as great.

I should like to take this opportunity to mention the charitable institutions which are in existence on French railways for the benefit of the men employed on them, and to explain briefly the benefit fund scheme of the Western Railway of France.

Broadly speaking, it is what, in English, we should call a system of deferred pay, compensation for accidents, allowance for sickness, and the like, in the interest of all classes of *employés*. This is provided for by an elaborate system of percentages, in each case on the yearly salary or wages—two-thirds of the amount being deducted from the *employés*' yearly pay, and one-third provided, as a sort of bonus, by the company. In addition to the above benefits, which are not unusual on English railways, French railway *employés* enjoy many minor payments in kind, such as carriage of furniture, goods, and food

at a reduction of 2 per cent. per ton; as well as free passes for the men and half-quarter fares for their wives and children, and an allowance for rent in proportion to their wages. The allowance for rent is proportionately greater in Paris than in provincial towns, and additional allowances for food, fuel, and 'hygienic beverages' are also made in times when exhibitions raise prices, and in severe winters.

The sons of the company's servants have the precedence of all applicants for work. Wives of workmen are provided in their own homes with the lighter upholstering for the furnishing of the carriages, the making of window-blinds, &c. A crèche, an infant-school, an orphanage, and a commercial school in connection with the Chamber of Commerce, are all provided in Paris. Married men's full pay goes on during the twenty-eight or thirty days in the year when they are called off for military duties; single men have part payment. Twelve days' pay is allowed during yearly holiday. Widows and orphans receive annuities; the latter till they reach eighteen years of age. Allowances are also made by the company for medical attendance and medicine in cases of illness, and for funerals and graves.

In 1875 a co-operative store was opened in Paris, to provide on low terms, and carriage free, household necessaries for men living at a distance on the line. Deliveries take place twice a month, four days after receipt of the order. Money is also lent without interest in cases of temporary embarrassment.

Amongst other railways with which I was connected was the Fell Railway, over the Mont Cenis. I was one of the originators of that most hazardous enterprise, which consisted in ascending the mountain instead of passing underneath by means of a tunnel. The idea was strongly condemned at the time by many authorities on railway construction, both English and continental; but although the railway carries some 30,000 to 40,000 passengers a year, no accident ever occurred. The system is well known. It is, in a few words, a double rail, as other railways, with an extra wheel, turning horizontally by a rotatory motion and clipping a centre rail, thus ensuring its safety round any curve, however sharp. I was continually going from Mont St. Michel, at the foot of the Alps, on the French side, to Modane, on the Italian frontier, and thence to Susa, where it joined the main Italian lines.

I once spent a week at the village of Mont Cenis, almost the highest point of the Cottian Alps, between Savoy and Piedmont. Once there was twenty-four feet of snow, but this railroad had been kept open by incessant labour. I had for companions an engine-driver, named Morton, and his wife. For food, amongst other things, we got excellent fish from the lake. When on the road once, I met a Polish prince whom I knew at the Cercle de l'Union, Paris. He was astonished to see me, and said: 'Tant de persévérance mérite du succès,' and he proceeded in his carriage on the road to St. Michel.

On my return to Paris I was bantered a good deal about my enterprise, and was told that an Englishman, with a taste for sensational accidents, had been at the Mont St. Michel the whole time of the trials, on the look-out for a catastrophe. He must have been a relation of the legendary Englishman, who is alleged not to have missed a single performance of Blondin's at the Crystal Palace, and to have followed him all over the world, in order to be present when he fell and broke his neck. I have come across a good many British eccentrics of this kind, whose performances have not a little contributed to give foreigners a queer idea of the

character and habits of the aborigines of the British Isles. I remember once, at Rheims, seeing an English baronet, whose name I cannot recall, who, much to the surprise of the natives, was travelling about France in a four-wheeled van, the inside and outside of which were papered with copies of the 'Times.'

I was once at Berne on business, connected with the junction of the French and the Swiss railways. Accompanied by one of my colleagues, I called on M. Staempfli, President of the Swiss Confederation. My companion, M. Denys Benoist d'Azy, former Minister of Finance, father-in-law of M. Cochin, was a great friend and supporter of the Jesuits. To reach the President of the Swiss Confederation we had to go up a very small and very narrow staircase and ring a bell at a very small door. This was opened by a person whom we mistook for a servant. When we asked to see the President, he answered: 'I am the President.'

After we had concluded our business, M. Staempfli turned to me and said: 'Comme Anglais vous devriez être très content de me voir, parce que c'est moi qui ai mis les Jésuites à la porte.' We made no reply to this remark, but my colleague, who, like myself, came of a

staunch Catholic stock, looked visibly shocked. He did not, however, retort, 'I am a Jesuit.' This visit to the President of the Swiss Confederation reminds me of an incident which happened years ago when driving in Normandy with Bertin aîné, the founder of the 'Journal des Débats,' and one of the most able and liberal-minded men in France. On the road we passed a country curé, a harmless enough man. Bertin, who, like many other French people, could not abide the look of a priest, got up from his seat, brandished his stick at the retreating figure of the curé, and called out: 'Je voudrais noyer tout ce monde-là.'

Coming back to railway experiences, one satisfaction which comes to a man who holds a position of official responsibility consists in the unexpected opportunity it sometimes gives him of doing the public a good turn. Once, at Vienna, I was received in audience, in my capacity as a director of the Austrian Railway, by the Emperor Francis Joseph. I was accompanied by two English colleagues, who cherished great expectations from the interview. His Majesty pointedly asked what he could do for me. I did not wish for a personal decoration, and therefore said that, in the personal sense, I sought

nothing, but, if His Majesty would allow me, I should like to explain a public grievance which had probably escaped the notice of the Austrian Government. The Emperor graciously gave me permission, and I then mentioned that international trains from other parts of Europe were continually stopped, often in the dead of night, on the frontiers of the Austrian Empire, in order that soldiers might demand passports. This sometimes occasioned alarm, and always delay and inconvenience to passengers, and interfered with international communications. The Emperor turned to the officer in waiting and said, 'Make a note of that,' and within a fortnight passports were abolished throughout the Austrian Empire. This was better than getting a bit of tinsel for myself, though my colleagues were ruffled.

CHAPTER VI

BUSINESS FRIENDSHIPS

LIFE would be a poor affair but for its friendships; therefore I desire to speak about one of the most agreeable and helpful associations of the kind which I have ever known. It was in the opening year of the Queen's reign I first became acquainted with the late Mr. Thomas Brassey, one of the best and most sagacious men it has ever been my privilege to meet. Mr. Brassey was in 1836 a man of thirty-three, and had already made his mark as a contractor. He served his articles as a land surveyor to Mr. Laughton, of Chester, who was so satisfied with his ability that he took him into partnership and placed him at the head of a branch business at Birkenhead. When the Manchester and Liverpool Railway was in course of construction, Mr. Brassey attracted the notice of George Stephenson, who advised him to tender for some of the work that was in progress. He took the hint, and at the age of twenty-nine received his first rail-

way contract for the Penkridge Viaduct, between Stafford and Wolverhampton, on the line which now forms part of the London and North-Western system.

Stephenson was at that time engineer-in-chief; but shortly afterwards he resigned his appointment, and his pupil and assistant, Mr. Joseph Locke, took control of a line between Birmingham and Liverpool, which at that time was called the Grand Junction Railway. When the work was finished, Mr. Locke's services were sought in the construction of the London and Southampton Railway, and Mr. Brassey received the contract for the important works on that line between Basingstoke and Winchester.

The rapid growth of railway enterprise in England attracted attention on the other side of the Channel, and when the proposal took definite shape it was determined that the pioneer railway ought to be one which linked Paris with London, a determination which led in due course to the creation of the Paris and Rouen Railway, with which I have dealt in a previous chapter.

In my opinion, Sir Arthur Helps's biography of Mr. Brassey scarcely does justice to the great qualities of the man. It reduces him simply to

a railway contractor, excavating, and making railway and public works in all parts of the world. I knew him well and saw him continually, and never met a more excellent man. There were times, in his life, when Mr. Brassey and his partners found employment for 80,000 men, and, apart from such works as the Victoria Docks, the northern sewer in the main drainage of London, and the Thames Embankment, Mr. Brassey constructed 8,000 miles of railway. Unlike many great employers of labour—and it is this which I wish to lay stress upon—Mr. Brassey took a genuine interest in the men he employed. As I was acquainted with the two languages, I was continually on the works of the Paris and Rouen Railway. One of Brassey's great objects was to improve the relations between the engineers and the contractors. He was a just man, and wanted, above all, honest work. He put down with a stern hand the bribing of inspectors by contractors in order to pass 'scamped' work.

Brassey and his partner, Mackenzie, employed almost exclusively English and Irish navvies. In the rough work the Irish excel, but, unluckily for themselves, they do not always act with caution. Mr. Brassey and myself one day had an instance of this when the line to

Rouen was in progress. We saw an Irish navvy pulling some nails out of a plank which hung over the pit of a tunnel. He was positively standing on the plank he was dislodging. We saw his danger, and ran forward to stop him, but arrived too late, and he was killed before our eyes.

Mr. Brassey once told me he considered that the French were the best workmen in railway construction in districts where a light soil existed; the Piedmontese were the best in excavating tunnels; but for rough, hard, muddy work, the English navvy was not to be beaten. In Spain the embankments were made by women, who, with dogged patience, carried the earth in baskets on their backs, and were paid at the rate of ten sous a day. Mr. Brassey declared that the cost in the end proved to be about the same as if English navvies had been employed at thirty shillings a week.

I do not think I ever met a man of more benevolence than Mr. Brassey. His hand went instinctively to his pocket when cases of distress were brought before him. When the Victoria Docks were in course of construction, I told him that there were some Catholic schools for poor children in the neighbourhood, where a great

many of the children of his Irish workpeople were educated. I did so because I had previously asked the priest in charge whether he had ever sought help from the contractors. He said he had not, for he recognised it would be useless to ask for a subscription in that quarter, because they were Protestants. When I mentioned the matter to Mr. Brassey, he instantly exclaimed, 'Give them whatever you think proper, and debit my account, and do not hesitate on any further occasion to do the same, wherever it may be.'

Staunch Protestant though he was, he maintained one English-speaking Catholic priest at Poissy, and another at Rouen, for the Catholic workpeople, and also one or more English doctors to attend to them whilst working in France. He followed this system all over Europe wherever he contracted, for, in doing good, he recognised no barriers of nationality or creed.

In 1866, at the time of the great financial panic caused by the failure of Overend, Gurney, & Company, Mr. Brassey, like everybody else at the moment, was in need of money. On the day which was called 'Black Friday,' I went down to Lombard Street with him, and called on his bankers, Messrs. Glyn & Company. I asked them, as his bankers, to advance him a

certain sum. After much consultation they gave him 30,000*l*., but old Mr. Glyn (the head of the house) said he must have 'some stuff' in exchange, meaning securities. We returned to Mr. Brassey's office in Great George Street, Westminster, and filled a large box with securities, which I took back to Mr. Glyn. He would not even open it, but said to a clerk, 'Put it in the safe.' Mr. Glyn wanted Mr. Brassey to promise that he would not give all his money away to his friends. To this proposed stipulation Mr. Brassey demurred, and on leaving Mr. Glyn's office asked me whether I wanted any money. I told him I did not, but on the steps of the bank we met a gentleman whom we knew well who was in a less happy condition, and in spite of my protest Mr. Brassey presented him with 10,000*l*.

At a bazaar held at the French Embassy at Albert Gate, Hyde Park, Mr. Brassey told me to spend whatever I liked on his account. When I had parted with all my money, and his too, I drove to his office, and asked him what I was to do, as I was getting reckless. He answered: 'I am so much indebted to the French for their kindness towards me that you can go on spending much further,' which I did. Perhaps it

might be supposed that I took something away in exchange; but all the ladies, except Lady Emily Stonor, daughter of Sir Robert Peel, calmly kept what I bought to sell to other purchasers, except what I mischievously tried to hide.

Mr. Brassey was to a large extent a self-educated man, for he had been put to work at sixteen. He wrote a beautiful hand, and always made his meaning perfectly clear. He worked incessantly; and I have often been with him in very out-of-the-way places, where the accommodation was so poor that we had to sleep in the same room. He would often sit up far into the night, writing to his numerous agents, long after I had gone to bed. His railway work in France was always well done, but not as good in quality as at present, for machinery was less perfect and railway engineering less understood; whilst capital was small, for public confidence had only been partially won in those days on behalf of such enterprises. When the Paris and Rouen Railway was constructed, the formalities for obtaining a concession were simple and expeditious; in fact, the land was bought and the road to Rouen made before the formal authorisation to commence work was given under the decree authorising the construc-

tion of the railway. At the present moment the preliminary negotiations require at least two years. Traffic was small at first, and many people in France, as well as in England, looked askance at the new method of locomotion and continued to travel in their carriages. Even when they entrusted themselves to the trains, the long tunnels continued to be a bugbear. I have seen at the entrance to one of the principal tunnels on the Rouen Railway a number of people getting out of the train to go to Evreux and other places, rather than take the direct road underground.

I really believe that no other man ever equalled Mr. Brassey in the amount of work which he did. His integrity, no less than his ability, accounts for the esteem in which he was held throughout Europe, and led to his success as a contractor for public works not merely all over Europe, but in India, Canada, and South America. He told me one day that the net profit which he had made, after deducting losses, was about 3 per cent. upon all he had done. No enterprise was too great for him, and when once he had embarked upon it, he stuck at nothing. His power of organisation was remarkable, and he was swift and clever in calculation. He

knew how to select the right sort of subordinates, and when he gave them his confidence, it was without stint.

On one occasion he undertook large works in Austria—the building of the Lemberg line—payable in paper, guaranteed by the Austrian Government, at a time when the credit of the country was at its lowest ebb. He held at one moment depreciated bonds to the amount of 1,000,000*l.*, taken at par; but his boldness was rewarded, for, when Austrian finances improved, he was paid at par. His reputation for honesty and straightforwardness was so great that he could always raise money on securities which, when he offered them, were sometimes not even looked at. Always a busy man, Mr. Brassey, shy though he was, was a favourite in society. He possessed much natural refinement, and was as courteous in manner as he was shrewd in judgment. He was always perfectly at his ease, though he never put himself unduly forward.

I introduced him to Mr. Gladstone, and after a long talk between them, Mr. Gladstone told me that he was astonished at Mr. Brassey's ability and conversation, and the width and accuracy of his knowledge on almost every subject. When Mr. Brassey was named Chevalier

of the Légion d'Honneur, his friends had great difficulty in getting him to wear the decoration. It was not that he did not value such a distinction, but he hated all parade. He was not a strong man, for later in life he was subject to fearful attacks of asthma; but this did not prevent him from working as usual to the end. Like myself, he could not, after a career of so much activity, drop work. He used to say that it required a special education to be idle, and that he did not know how he could possibly employ himself in a rational way if he retired from business; so he stuck to his work to the last, and died in harness, at the comparatively early age of sixty-five, on December 8, 1870.

Perhaps by no class was Thomas Brassey more appreciated than by working men. One of his humble admirers summed up the general verdict in homely but expressive words when he said: 'If Mr. Brassey had been a parson he would have been a bishop, and if he had been a prize-fighter he would have won the belt.'

With the Rothschilds I was naturally brought, as a banker, into close relations. I had a great respect for Baron James Rothschild,

who was Chairman of the Madrid and Saragossa Railway from its origin, and was also, like myself, a member of the board of the South Austrian Railway. Baron James was not merely a great financier but a most kind-hearted man. His charities extended to all classes and creeds, and in this his example has been followed by the present members of his family. The amount of money which he spent during the war to relieve distress was beyond calculation; a regular office was kept by the family, to which all appeals were sent. They were examined, and if found worthy were never neglected.

Amongst my early friends was Sir Moses Montefiore. He was associated with my father in establishing the Provincial Bank of Ireland, of which I have already spoken. Like one of the Rothschilds, he was open-handed and generous to all denominations. When Sir Moses made his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, at a period when the journey was difficult and fatiguing, Jew though he was, he did not forget his friends of other creeds. I say this because he brought back from Jerusalem a number of Catholic relics, some of which are still in the possession of my family.

I have already spoken of my lifelong connection with the development of railways, but I have said but little about my colleagues. The truth is that, within the last few years, I have had the misfortune to see die around me a large number of those who were more closely connected with my work. Many of them were well-known engineers, distinguished *élèves de la Polytechnique*, an institution which to-day, as in the past, is doing much in many directions for the welfare of France, and is known favourably all over the world.

Happily, I have still around me many able men who were trained in that institution, and amongst the rest M. Marin and M. Larminat of the Western Railway, and M. Noblemaire and M. Geoffroy of the Lyons Railway. M. Marin has had a most distinguished career. During many years, as chairman of the Western Railway in France, he was Directeur Général, a position which he filled with uncommon ability. M. Marin, in consequence of a partial failure of health, is now compelled to take a less active part in public affairs ; but he is still Consulting Director, and his advice is always received with the attention which his high talents and great experience merit. During M. Marin's tenure of

office some of the first engineering works of the Western Railway were constructed.

I never met with a man better equipped in all practical subjects than M. Noblemaire. His knowledge is wellnigh encyclopædic, and his capacity as a linguist is extraordinary. Two instances of this may be cited. He knew on one occasion that he would be called upon to make a speech at a railway banquet in Russia, and he contrived in the space of a few days to acquire enough of the language to make himself clear. M. Noblemaire picked up with equal rapidity enough English to speak with success at a railway banquet given in Edinburgh on the occasion of the opening of the Forth Bridge; and in other countries on similar occasions, he has never been nonplussed. As a friend I cannot say too much of him. He always speaks, when before the board, in a clear, weighty manner, and explains any difficult point with *infiniment d'esprit*. He listens to all objections with patience, and frequently surrenders his own opinion without the slightest ill-humour.

Amongst other well-known men in finance with whom I was intimate was Mr. Bertram Currie, of Messrs. Glyn, Mills, Currie, & Co. He was a close friend of mine, and I shared his

opinions on most monetary questions. This is especially the case in regard to bimetalism, of which I have been, and still am, an uncompromising opponent. He used to say whenever the subject was broached that he could not see why England, being the gold market of the world, should assist other nations to get rid of their superfluous silver. He frequently remarked that the day when a person went to the bank with a five-pound note to ask for five pounds in gold, and was obliged to take a large portion in silver, the bank-note would be depreciated.

Another well-known man with whom I was intimate in the City was Mr. Samuel Jones Lloyd, afterwards Lord Overstone, to whom I have before referred as having taken up bills for me at a critical moment during the construction of the Paris-Rouen line. He was a handsome man, popular in society, and in business he had the art of readily grasping complicated problems. He was one of the most distinguished monetary authorities of that period, and it is an open secret that he might have held high political office. As it was, he stuck to the work of the banking-house of Jones Lloyd & Company, a firm which was afterwards merged in the London and Westminster Bank. At the same time,

more than one Chancellor of the Exchequer was indebted to him for shrewd advice. When I was a banker in Paris, I had constant, and, I may add, satisfactory dealings with Jones Lloyd & Company.

Amongst the engineers with whom I was acquainted was the famous Isambard Brunel. He was of French descent, and, although born at Portsmouth, spoke English with a certain accent, owing to having passed the earlier years of his life in Paris, where he was educated at the Lycée Henri IV. He helped his father, Sir Isambard Brunel, in the construction of the Thames Tunnel, and at the early age of twenty-seven, in 1833, was appointed engineer to the projected Great Western Railway, the construction of which he planned and superintended. The task was an arduous one, and difficulties with landowners and opposition from so-called experts called into play not only his powers as a professional engineer, but his ability as a negotiator. For solidity of construction and for skill and beauty of design, the Great Western Railway, although one of the first English railways built, holds a very high place.

The Hanwell Viaduct, the Maidenhead Bridge, the great bridges at Chepstow and Saltash, and

the Box Tunnel, at the time and for long afterwards the longest tunnel in the world, are monuments of the thoroughness of Isambard Brunel's work. It was he, by the way, who introduced the 'broad gauge' on the Great Western, and thus initiated the famous battle of the gauges which lasted up to a few years ago. Brunel was the first to suggest the possibility of a regular line of steamers between England and the United States, and I remember the outburst of laughter in England when he seriously proposed the construction of a steamer, to be called the 'Great Western,' to go from Bristol to New York. The steamer was built, in spite of the jeers of the public; and, notwithstanding Dr. Lardner's mathematical proof of the impossibility of a steamer making the journey, the 'Great Western' did go to New York, and come back. Brunel was so pleased at the success of his venture that he started the construction of the famous 'Great Eastern,' which he saw launched, but which he did not live to see go on her first journey.

In addition to his other undertakings, Brunel examined the question of the Channel Tunnel, and, as far as I remember, considered it a perfectly feasible scheme; but the military authorities were then, as I believe they are still, hostile

to the proposal. Mr. Brassey favoured the idea, as did many other experts. According to a time-honoured English custom, a great many dinners were given to advance the project, and one gentleman, a man of wit, said he thought that it would be easy to make the tunnel by softening the chalk with the champagne consumed at those dinners. I myself still hold a few shares in the Channel Tunnel Company, but they are probably valueless. People continually say that if the tunnel were made they would not venture to travel through it, owing to the danger of the sea breaking through. All practical engineers, however, ridicule that idea, for at the proposed depth—a hundred and fifty feet—there could be no danger from the sea. As for the bridge which has sometimes been advocated, my knowledge of the Channel convinces me that such an undertaking is quite out of the question. Whatever the span of the piers might be, it would be impossible to make it.

For some years I was a member of the committee for the Euphrates Valley Railway, and in that capacity frequently met Sir John Fowler. He gave us the greatest assistance. Perhaps the chief reason why Disraeli took Cyprus was

that that island lay opposite the approach to the Euphrates Valley from the Mediterranean. That railway would have provided swift communication with the East, and would have carried our troops to India in much less time than is now required. Sir John Fowler estimated the expense at first at ten thousand pounds a mile; but owing to the cheapness of labour, he found afterwards that it was possible to construct a railway, in spite of the hilly nature of the country, for six thousand pounds a mile. One reason urged against the project was that the Arabs would destroy the line, and our Government in the end refused, as usual, a guarantee. I do not suppose for a moment that the Arabs would have meddled with the railway, for they have not interfered with the telegraph wires which have since been left to their mercy, and, moreover, the opposition of natives has ceased to be an insuperable objection to the construction of railways, and experience has proved that they soon get accustomed to them.

CHAPTER VII

MY EXPERIENCES IN THE REVOLUTION OF 1848

I REMEMBER perfectly not merely the Revolution of 1848, but the events which led up to it. Just before it occurred I was at a dinner-party in London. Amongst the company was Sir Robert Peel, and in the course of general conversation he turned to me and asked abruptly, 'What are you doing here? Why are you not in Paris? I see signs of an immediate revolution there. Louis Philippe has just refused to allow Odilon Barrot and his party to hold a political banquet.' Barrot was then at the height of his power, and I recognised what might follow such a rebuff. I returned immediately to Paris, called upon M. Guizot, who was then Premier, and repeated to him Peel's remarks. The reply I received was, 'La Garde Nationale est bonne et il n'y a aucun danger.' I mentioned the matter to M. Duchâtel, the Minister of the Interior, and his reply was to the same effect.

No throne in Europe was, to all outward appearances, more secure in 1847 than that of Louis Philippe. There had been no intestine troubles in France since 1839, and the Dynasty of July persuaded itself that it had gathered round it many of the supporters of the Imperial *régime*. Flattered by the homage of the Court, the veterans of the former Civil Government, and the illustrious survivors of the great army of the Empire helped to strengthen and to lend distinction to the throne of Louis Philippe. The Legitimists were led by Berryer, the eloquent defender of Marshal Ney, and long afterwards of Montalembert. Berryer was a politician of the first rank, and admittedly the first advocate in France, and therefore a host in himself. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, M. Guizot, preserved peace, but never sacrificed anything that touched the interests or imperilled the dignity of his country. But, nevertheless, the Republican party in the Chamber was still strong, and counted in its ranks men of the calibre of Emmanuel Arago, Garnier-Pagès, Dupont de l'Eure, Ledru-Rollin, Louis Blanc, and Lamartine.

There were signs of great uneasiness, although perhaps not such as to cause serious

misgivings as to the very existence of a constitutional government. Once, in the Chamber of Deputies, M. de Montalivet, the great friend and at one time the Minister and confidential adviser of Louis Philippe, made use, when speaking of the people, of the word *sujet*, and this caused a violent uproar. The old Republican and *Frondeur* spirit never missed an opportunity of asserting itself. The hereditary peerage remained as a last guarantee of stability, but the people regarded it with antipathy, and ominously determined to get rid of it as a branch of government.

The case of M. Teste, Ministre des Travaux Publics, was also a cause not merely of embarrassment but of weakness to the Government. He was accused of having received a bribe of 100,000 francs for a concession for some Government works, and was in consequence dismissed from the public service. Teste was a poor man, the money was small; but such things up to that period had seldom been known in France. He was an ignorant man to have reached such a position of authority. He began life as a woollen manufacturer in Normandy, and he once told me, with a rather bitter smile, that he thought he was a much

better maker of 'bonnets de nuit' than of politics.

To all these sources of uneasiness must be added the incitements of the press, of pamphleteers, and of popular novelists. Lamennais' still powerful pen united with Louis Blanc's socialism and Eugène Sue's popular *roman-feuilleton*, in order to sow dissatisfaction among the people, and even Sue's now almost forgotten 'Mystères du Peuple' had the honour of prosecution as a pernicious book and of condemnation by the courts of the realm.

Louis Philippe, in spite of the menacing signs of the times and the ill-concealed alarm of his own Court, was not to be persuaded that there was any real danger. He insisted upon keeping M. Guizot in office in defiance of the universal demand for his dismissal, and persisted in his view until the Revolution commenced on February 24, 1848. In the midst of the outburst M. Guizot resigned office, but his retirement came too late to save the throne of Louis Philippe.

The first mutterings of the storm began in a distant quarter of the town; but it gradually came nearer, until the Chaussée d'Antin was filled with the clamour of the crowd. I was

at my offices in the Rue Basse du Rempart, and right opposite my windows stood the old Foreign Office. Presently a soldier fired a shot at the insurgents, and one of them was killed. The mob instantly lifted the body, and carried it in procession about the boulevards, and the spectacle rendered the rapidly increasing crowd more and more furious. In an incredibly short space of time, barricades were erected in every direction in that part of the town. An enormous one was thrown up under the windows of the house then tenanted by the Princesse de Lieven, the property now occupied by Baron Alphonse de Rothschild.

Next morning, the historic February 25, I went, at some risk, with my cousin, Colonel Charles Dillon, an officer in the French army, to the Tuileries. As we were going up the grand staircase we met the Duc de Nemours descending, with a document in his hand. We stopped him for a moment, and asked him what were its contents. He replied, *L'Abdication du Roi*—— Colonel Dillon exclaimed, 'It is an act of folly,' but the Duc de Nemours insisted that there was no alternative. He gave the note of abdication to an aide-de-camp, who carried it across the Tuileries Gardens. Colonel Dillon and myself

followed him, and at the Place de la Concorde we found General Bedau stationed, at the head of his staff. Colonel Dillon said to him, *Monsieur le Général, que faites-vous ?* The General replied, *Je n'ai pas d'ordres.* Bedau was at that moment in command of a large number of troops lining the Seine, and, no orders being given, the infantry disbanded, and the soldiers, thinking they had a fine opportunity to get back to their native place, divested themselves of their accoutrements and ran off, some even throwing their arms into the river.

The next incident which I recall was a glimpse of the departure of Louis Philippe and his personal attendants from the Tuileries in three hackney coaches, which had come by way of the Rue de Rivoli. He was accompanied by the Queen and his friend Comte Montalivet, one of those who, by the way, were chiefly responsible for the creation of the Versailles Museum. His Majesty drove to Versailles, and thence by road to Trouville, where he arrived on February 27. He embarked at Havre on March 2, and reached Newhaven the following day.

At the time of the Revolution, two of the Royal Princes were in Algiers—the Duc de Montpensier and the Duc d'Aumale. Their

families were, I think, at the Royal Château at Neuilly. The Duc de Nemours escaped, with my assistance, from Paris to Boulogne, where he kept in hiding. By some means the Princesse de Joinville reached Abbeville, where I found her a few days later, and took her to Boulogne, where she embarked on an English boat.

Meanwhile the Duchesse d'Orléans remained at the Tuileries with her two children, the Comte de Paris, in whose favour Louis Philippe had abdicated, and the Duc de Chartres. On February 25, hearing that the Duchesse was going to the Chamber of Deputies, with her children, to press the claims of the grandson, in whose favour Louis Philippe had resigned the crown, and to ask that she herself might be appointed Régente, I went there with M. Ybry, one of my railway colleagues. At the door we saw a woman, smeared with blood, mounted on the horse of a Garde Municipal. She was dressed in a soldier's coat and was brandishing a loaded horse-pistol. I went up to her, took the pistol out of her hand, and uncocked it, and was cheered by the mob.

When we got into the Chamber the tumult was indescribable. One revolutionist after another mounted the tribune. The place was

a perfect Babel. The great majority of the Deputies were favourable to the Duchess's claim; but a great many strangers had obtained admission to the Assembly, and urged the abolition of royalty and the establishment of a Provisional Government. M. de Lamartine was considered to express the general opinion when he exclaimed: 'It is one of the most touching spectacles in human annals to see this august Princess defending the rights of her innocent son, and leaving her empty palace in order to appeal to the representatives of the nation.'

The Duchesse d'Orléans confronted the Assembly from a prominent position, and surveyed the scene with the greatest courage. She twice attempted to address some words to the Deputies, but the uproar was so great that she could not be heard. Afraid lest some personal insult should be offered to her, I elbowed my way, with M. Ybry, as near as I could to her, and we helped Colonel Montguyon and M. Lippmann to find her children, who had got separated from her in the crush. The crowd gave way, and the Duchesse escaped. She sought refuge at the house of her friend the Comtesse Anatole de Montesquieu at Bligny, but, when it became obvious that all hope of restoration was gone, she

decided to follow the rest of the royal family into exile.

Meanwhile, as soon as the Duchesse had safely quitted the Assembly, I ran to the British Embassy, and on arriving there was so excited that I was unable to speak for some moments. Then I told Lord Normanby what had occurred; and I had scarcely done so before one of the Attachés—if I remember rightly, it was Sir William Stewart, afterwards Minister-Plenipotentiary at Athens, who died not long ago—hurried into the room and corroborated my statement. A few days later, I busied myself in getting members of the royal family and the ex-Ministers of Louis Philippe—MM. Guizot, Thiers, Delessert (Préfet de Police), and Dumont—to England. I asked for passports for them to be given in English names; but it was hinted to me that it would be better to put them in the names of inhabitants of Guernsey or Jersey, as they spoke French and there was less chance of detection. I accompanied the Ministers to Boulogne, and thus saw them follow the King and the Royal Princes and Princesses into exile.

The first act of the Revolutionary Government was to get rid of the Chambre des Pairs.

Neither the authority of M. Royer-Collard nor the eloquence of M. Thiers could save it, though responsible statesmen, like the Duc de Broglie, did not disguise their fears when the Act which abolished the Chambre des Pairs was passed. 'Avec les Pairs, la Royauté s'en va,' said the Duc de Broglie when the final vote was given, which deprived the Monarchy of July of its soundest support.

The early days of the Republic of 1848 were rather troubled, and the Phrygian bonnet had not long replaced the royal arms of France, when the moderates found themselves at war with the extremists and an attempt was made, as later in 1871, to establish a commune in Paris.

When the fight between General Cavaignac and the Red Republicans began in the spring of 1848, I was one day at the Chamber of Deputies, when a remarkable incident occurred. General Cavaignac was not merely Minister of War, but virtual dictator. On the occasion in question, in the midst of a crowd of deputies, military men, and officials, in one of the lobbies, he held up a paper and said, 'Is there anybody here who will take a despatch to Amiens?' At first nobody came forward; but after a pause a gentle-

man present offered his services, and then passed the difficult mission on to me, whom, as a railway man, he considered the right man for it; and I, acting on the impulse of the moment, undertook to make the journey. It was a case of the utmost urgency—the bringing of troops, in fact, to Paris, to quell the insurgents. I did not go home, but started immediately as I was. I hastened first of all to the manager's office of the North of France Railway, to ask him to allow me to have a locomotive on which to make the journey. He said, 'You are mad to think of it;' but he gave me an order to get an engine, if I could make my way by hook or by crook to the railway workshops, which were at La Chapelle.

I was accompanied by M. Chevalier, brother of Michel Chevalier, the eminent political economist and free-trader, subsequently private secretary of Napoleon III., and went immediately to the Gare du Nord, where I was told that I could go no further, as the terminus was already in the hands of the insurgents. I then told an untruth, and said that I was carrying despatches to the English Government; and through this assumption of diplomatic personality I contrived to get past those who would otherwise have opposed

me, and proceeded alone to La Chapelle, keeping all the time by the side of the line. I crept along the ditch by the side of the permanent way, and as I went under the first bridge a shot was fired at me, which whizzed past in unpleasant proximity to my ear.

When I got to the workshops at La Chapelle, I found a lot of enginemen and stokers hard at work, and when I asked them what they were doing, they replied, 'Making gun-cotton.' While I was there an engine-driver pulled me by the coat and said, '*Je vous connais.*' For the moment I felt taken aback and rather alarmed; but he whispered, 'Go down the line, and I will come and fetch you.' I did so, and waited at a distance of about half a mile beyond the fortifications. Here I was attacked by a *cantonnier*, but I quickly got rid of him by sending him flying down the embankment.

The engine-driver came up with a locomotive, and I got safely to Pontoise. There were only the two of us on the engine, and when we arrived at that place the insurgents tried to stop us; but the sub-prefect put three or four men of the Garde Nationale on to the engine, and the attempt to wreck it was thus prevented. We then proceeded, and got to Amiens in about

seven hours. As soon as I arrived in that city, I went to the Prefecture, and had an interview with the Préfet, who was well acquainted with me, as we had met many times in previous years in connection with the construction of the railway. He was utterly astounded at seeing me, and declared that he could not understand how ever I had contrived to get through from Paris. I told him that I had brought him a despatch from General Cavaignac, which was concealed in my shoe, and when challenged on the road I had professed that my mission was a diplomatic one to the English Government.

He immediately sent for the general in command of the district, and told him that he must despatch as large a force as possible to Paris without any delay. No time was lost; the troops, fully equipped, were quickly on the rail, and as the crisis was great, not only the whole of the garrison of Amiens but all the military division as well were sent.

The number of men forwarded must have been between thirty and forty thousand. I went myself by the first train, and we got through to St. Denis without any difficulty. On our arrival there, however, we were told that the rest of the road to Paris, which ran all the way through a

cutting, was in the hands of the insurgents. It was decided to stop the train at St. Denis and to keep the trains there until the arrival of orders from Paris. The general in command accepted my offer to take despatches into Paris, and I made my way on foot to the railway works at La Chapelle, where I met M. Ybry, my colleague at the railway, who also happened to be the mayor of my arrondissement, and who accompanied me through the dangerous quarter between La Chapelle and the Chamber of Deputies. We had hardly started when we were challenged by an insurgent, who had mounted guard on the top of one of the bridges of Montmartre. We got into the ditch, but a shot from his rifle whistled uncomfortably near my ears.

On reaching the Chamber, I hastened to give General Cavaignac an account of my mission, and to inform him that the first train-load of troops, who were to be followed by others in quick succession, were awaiting orders at St. Denis. He gave me an order to the colonel of Dragoons to send immediately one of his soldiers to the place where the troops which had come from Amiens were waiting, with instructions to the general commanding to enter Paris without delay. The colonel of Dragoons simply told me

that he would not carry out such instructions, and handed me back General Cavaignac's letter.

Things were obviously getting worse and worse, and Cavaignac could not even count upon the relatively small number of soldiers who were inside Paris. As to the Garde Nationale, it was an open secret that they were in sympathy with the insurgents. I naturally felt much fatigued after my journey, and could not go back to St. Denis with Cavaignac's orders. I therefore went home, and sent my coachman to the general in command of the troops whom I had left in the railway-cutting. He fulfilled the mission, and the troops from Amiens began to enter Paris the same night.

Next morning I went as usual to the Western Railway, where I spent the day. On returning home in the evening I was stopped at the entrance of the Faubourg St. Honoré, Paris being *en état de siège*, and was challenged by a sentry. I had unfortunately forgotten the password. The officer on guard said he could not let me pass, or send an escort to take me home. However, other people came up, and I listened attentively to what they said, and at last, after an hour or so, I heard some one say 'Cæsar'—a strangely ominous password, by the way, when one re-

members that the revolution of 1848 led to the *coup d'état* of December 2 and to the Cæsarian *régime* of Napoleon III. I at once went forward, and told the officer in command that I had just remembered the *mot d'ordre*, and so got home at last.

The state of siege was most stringent. Everybody who had windows looking on the street was compelled to keep his shutters closed. No carriages were allowed in the streets, except official ones, which were provided with a special permit. I ventured out once, with Lord Pembroke and my wife, to go to the British embassy in order to inform Lord Normanby of my adventure in getting to Amiens and back. We were going by the Place Beauvau, and when close to the Elysée were stopped by a drummer-boy, who made his Lordship take off his hat, felt him all over, and also examined my wife, who was indignant at such treatment. I naturally passed through the same ordeal. I now considered my mission for the French Government at an end, and I went regularly to my office and attended to my own business.

The immediate cause of this tremendous rising—which has become known to history as 'les Journées de Juin,' and was only put down

after the bloodiest and most severe fighting the streets of Paris have ever seen—was the madcap institution of the Ateliers Nationaux. In consequence of the economic crisis caused by the revolution, the exile of Louis Philippe, and the uncertainty as to what was going to happen, employers of labour naturally stopped all the works they could stop, thus throwing into the streets thousands of hungry and penniless men, who were a source of danger to the Government and to public safety. Under the inspiration of dogmatic *visionnaires* like Louis Blanc and Emile Thomas, the Provisional Government created the Ateliers Nationaux, at the head of which the two above-named gentlemen were placed, and in which crowds were set to useless and unproductive tasks, for which they were paid out of the Treasury. Thousands, for instance, were employed in the shifting of sand, mounds of which surrounded the Champ de Mars, from one place to another, under the supervision of Louis Blanc, who had secured a place in the Provisional Government. I went out of curiosity to see this odd form of organised labour, and upon asking a workman what they would do next, he dryly remarked : 'Probablement mettre la Seine en bouteilles.'

The cost of these works was enormous. It was calculated that at one time more than 120,000 men were thus employed. The finances of the country were being ruined by the maintenance of such numbers in practical idleness at the expense of the State. The National Assembly, which followed the Provisional Government, afraid at the vast increase of taxation, decided to abolish the Ateliers Nationaux. This decision highly incensed the crowds who had found easily earned wages under the ægis of Louis Blanc. Frequent collisions took place between the 'national labourers' and the military, which culminated in a regular rebellion.

My sympathies were always with the House of Orleans, and I had the honour of paying my respects to Louis Philippe in exile. I remember one day, at dinner at Claremont, that the King said: 'If it were not for the generosity of the Queen of England, I should not have either this house to cover my head, or the plate, or anything which is on the table.' It was commonly supposed that the King was very rich; but that at least was not the case in his exile, for all his property in France had been forfeited and sequestrated. There appeared in 'Punch,' at the time of Louis Philippe's arrival in England,

a cartoon which caused some sensation, and which depicted representative Englishmen doing homage to Louis Philippe when they thought he was rich, and on the other side turning their backs upon him when they found he was poor. One accusation brought against Louis Philippe was that he intrigued to gain the throne of France from the elder branch of the royal family. I have some doubts whether this was the case. Indeed, I know that he resisted, as long as ever he possibly could, the idea of taking the crown.

Louis Philippe once said to me that royalties ought not to show themselves too much in public. He thought that they ought to speak, like ancient oracles, from behind a curtain, since without the old trappings of royalty they were apt to seem commonplace to the multitude. The people, Louis Philippe thought, were inclined to grow careless about kings when they saw them at close quarters, just like other men. A curious remark this, from the lips of the 'bourgeois' king, who has ever had the reputation of doing more than any sovereign to democratise royalty, so to speak. But the words were uttered in his exile.

The year 1848 was memorable in England as

well as in France, though happily nothing more serious happened in London than political tumult. I was on this side of the Channel in that eventful month of April, and caught at least a passing glimpse of the Chartist agitation, when Feargus O'Connor was a nine-days' wonder. The success of the revolution in France had led the more fiery spirits among the advocates of the 'People's Charter' to believe that a decisive attempt on the part of the London mob would result in the capitulation of Parliament, and in the passing of the 'Six Articles,' whilst not a few of the leaders of the movement already pictured themselves getting as easily into the seats of Lord John Russell and of Lord Palmerston as Louis Blanc and Emile Thomas had got into the seats of Guizot and of his colleagues.

A monster meeting of half a million people had been announced for the 10th of April on Kennington Common, from which place they were to march on the House of Commons, to present a petition, alleged to have been signed by six million people, praying Parliament to grant the 'Six Articles.' It was an open secret that the intention of the leaders was to invade the precincts of the House, and to get forcible possession of the seat of government. Great

alarm prevailed in London. The meeting on Kennington Common was prohibited, the military were called out, and an appeal was made to all willing citizens to come forward and enrol themselves as special constables, whilst measures were taken for the defence of buildings which were supposed to run special risk. I remember taking some of my French friends, who happened to be in England at the time, to visit a few of the chief banks of the City. They were greatly surprised on being shown in each establishment a sort of emergency arsenal, filled with constables' staves, for the use of the clerks in case of a riot. Later in the same day I took them to the Reform Club, where these weapons of defence were again stocked for the use of the members.

One of the special constables, whom we met on that occasion, was the late Charles Pelham Villiers, M.P., with whom I was for years on terms of intimacy, and whom I never failed to visit when in London, as long as he was able to receive callers. We also came across Frederick Byng, and a large number of the stalwarts of the Liberal party, who were acting as emergency policemen.

There was a reign of terror in London on

the night before April 10. Many mansions were barricaded, and the streets of the West End were deserted, except for the valiant special constables, foremost amongst whom was Prince Louis Napoleon, the future Emperor of the French, who mounted guard in the neighbourhood of Grosvenor Square, with Lord Ashley (who afterwards, as the Earl of Shaftesbury, became famous as a philanthropist) for a companion.

I can remember the masked battery which the Duke of Wellington erected at the end of Westminster Bridge, in order to protect the Houses of Parliament and the Government offices from the threatened vengeance of the Kennington Common mob. On the fateful day, barely forty or fifty thousand people, instead of the promised half-million, assembled on the Common, and at the last moment the march to the Houses of Parliament was abandoned, and the rain—that queller of *émeutes*, as I have seen frequently in Paris—contributed largely to disperse the crowd. The power of Chartism did not survive this gigantic failure, and the showing up of the famous Petition, which the crowd was to take to Parliament, three-fourths of the signatures of which turned out to be forgeries or

names of non-existent persons, put a speedy end to the agitation.

When, however, the excitement was still at its height, and Feargus O'Connor still in his glory, I met in the Strand, by the entrance to Somerset House, a group of French sympathisers with the Chartists, who had come to London to help their cause. Their leader was M. Olinde Rodrigues, whom I knew as an old adherent of Saint-Simonism. As I passed he was getting up on a chair and beginning to harangue the crowd. A policeman told him to hold his tongue and get down; he refused to do either, whereupon there was a scuffle. The officer pulled him down and struck him with his truncheon, but I have no knowledge whether he posed next in the police court as a martyr of liberty.

But let us return to France.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EARLY DAYS OF THE SECOND EMPIRE

The Revolution of 1848 paved the way for the realisation of Prince Louis Napoleon's dreams. Eight years previously, he had made his historic descent on the coast of France, at Boulogne, where he landed with a couple of dozen companions, and a tame eagle, which was supposed to represent the Napoleonic legend, and which, as he grandiloquently stated in his proclamation to the people, was destined to fly from tower to tower until it reached the pinnacles of Notre-Dame. The enterprise ended ignominiously, by the death of the tame eagle and the arrest and imprisonment of the pretender. He remained in the Castle of Ham for six years, and then escaped, disguised as a workman carrying a plank upon his shoulder.

At that epoch there was a large issue made of false Exchequer bonds, in which some London financial houses were implicated. It was supposed that the money was raised in order to pay

the expenses of Prince Louis Napoleon's expedition to France, and he was accused, though quite unjustly, of knowing something of the affair.

After the Revolution of 1848 he offered his services to the Provisional Government; but their only reply was the introduction of a measure specially directed against him, and perpetually exiling him from France. Ominously enough, the Chambers refused to vote such a measure, and he was returned to the National Assembly by five departments. After the June riots he came forward as the candidate of law and order for the Presidency of the Republic, and was elected by the votes of five and a half millions of electors over the heads of General Cavaignac, the queller of the riots, who got hardly over a million votes, and of Lamartine the poet, chief of the Provisional Government, who got only a few thousands. He was not the man, however, 'to rest and be thankful,' and before long there was a dramatic turn of events.

Once, when I was alone with the President of the Republic at the Elysée, looking out of the window into the garden, I saw, chalked upon a sentry-box, the broad hint of a soldier to Napoleon: 'Finissez-en! faites-vous Empereur!'

I frequently saw the President at the Elysée, and on one occasion went with a deputation from Boulogne to ask that the postal service between England and France should be sent from Dover to Boulogne, instead of to Calais. M. Adam, Mayor of Boulogne, was the head of the deputation, and it so happened that he was the very man who had arrested Napoleon when he made his descent with the tame eagle on the French coast. Napoleon recognised him, and said, as he shook hands: 'I hope you are not coming on the same mission as before.' M. Adam, I ought perhaps to say, was associated with myself and other Englishmen in connection with the Boulogne and Amiens Railway, opened before the railway which now links the latter city with Paris.

When the *Coup d'État* took place, the members of the Provisional Government were naturally in a hurry to leave France, and particularly M. Ledru-Rollin and M. Caussidière. Most of them went to London, where as political exiles they watched the progress of events. Ledru-Rollin had in former years taken the most gloomy views of the future of England in a book entitled 'La Décadence de l'Angleterre.' I met him in London, shortly after the *Coup*

d'État, and asked him whether he was still of the same opinion. He replied, 'Not in the least so. My views are completely changed by what I have seen in your country. The system of government is magnificent, and I am particularly impressed by the efficiency of your poor-laws.' The English system for the relief of distress thus appealed powerfully to a colleague of M. Louis Blanc and a member of a Government of brilliant men, who had found nothing better for the relief of distress than the Ateliers Nationaux, and the shifting of sand mounds on the Champ de Mars.

Ledru-Rollin studied thoroughly the institutions of this country, both in their political and economic aspects, and became a great admirer of England. M. Caussidière, when in London, lodged in Leicester Square, and made a modest livelihood as a wine merchant. He called on Lord Brougham to solicit custom, and the latter jocosely exclaimed: 'You said in the Chamber of Deputies, M. Caussidière, that you made order out of chaos. Pray, what do you make your wine out of?'

Although a friend of Louis Napoleon in his youth at Rome, whilst in exile in London, and when President of the Republic, I did not

frequent his Court when he became Emperor by the *Coup d'État* of December 2, 1851. I felt I owed a debt of gratitude to Louis Philippe, under whose government some of my most important work in France had been done, and from whom I had ever received signal marks of appreciation. It was my habit, whenever I went to England, to go to Claremont to pay my respects to the exiled King, and to see M. Paton, his secretary, a man of infinite wit, who was most faithful to the Orleans family, and whose companionship helped to brighten the heavy monotony of exile for the old Sovereign. My relations with the official world, especially in the early years of the Empire, were only such as I could not help having, and my reminiscences of those days are not, therefore, so full as some of my readers might expect.

Napoleon III. believed in a spirited foreign policy. He knew that if his dynasty was to endure he must heighten the prestige of France abroad. 'L'Empire c'est la Paix,' the cry by which the peaceful populations of France, tired of useless revolutions and apprehensive of the fitful outbursts of Paris, had been won over to the acceptance of the *Coup d'Etat*, soon turned out but a delusion and a snare.

Napoleon III. had hardly been sitting on the throne for two years when the Crimean war broke out. The attitude of the Czar Nicholas, in the matter of the secular difficulties between Greeks and Latins in Jerusalem, and his claim to be recognised as the official protector of the Greek Christians in the Holy Land, gave Napoleon an opportunity of reasserting the old claims of France to the protectorate of Christian missions and settlements in the Levant, and in the East. By the advice of the Emperor of the French the Sultan refused to acknowledge Nicholas's pretensions.

England, which had no particular desire to see Russia at Constantinople, and, moreover, was getting rather uneasy at the increase of the Russian fleet, joined hands with Napoleon. When Nicholas, refusing to submit his claim to the Vienna Conference, to which it had been referred by the Governments guaranteeing the integrity of Turkey, marched his troops into Turkish territory, war was declared. With the death of Nicholas and the fall of Sebastopol, the unsatisfactory peace of Paris brought hostilities to a close ; but nobody was satisfied. Indeed, the relations between England and France became so cold, owing to Napoleon having compelled

the British to make peace before they had attained the object for which they supported him in the Crimea, viz. the destruction of the Russian fleet, that it looked at one time as though the allies of Inkermann were going to turn on each other. The attempt of Orsini, and the refusal of England to expel political agitators and even anarchists, or to legislate against them, nearly brought matters to a crisis; but events in Italy were moving so fast that they soon engrossed the attention of the French, to the exclusion of everything else. The secret understanding between Napoleon and Victor Emmanuel, under which Nice and Savoy were to be handed to France in exchange for her support in freeing Italy from the Austrian dominion, soon leaked out, and when, early in 1859, Austria forced the situation by ordering Victor Emmanuel to reduce his army and dismiss his volunteers, Napoleon was enabled to announce, in words that have become historic, his intention of 'freeing Italy from the Alps to the Adriatic.'

I was in Verona on June 24, 1859, when the battle of Solferino was in progress, and can vividly recall the terrible suspense, in that city, whilst the fortunes of the day were still

undecided. As an Englishman, I was allowed to cross the frontier from France to Italy. I was the only person connected with the South Austrian Railway who was in Verona at that crisis. On my journey I passed Magenta, where the Austrians and the French, the latter under Marshal MacMahon, fought almost a drawn battle on June 4. Though the result was indecisive, the Austrians lost nearly 10,000 men and the French between 4,000 and 5,000. I saw in the cuttings, along the railway, the bodies of hundreds of men who had been killed in the battle lying half-buried. In Verona itself, I was an eyewitness of much pitiful confusion in the Austrian arrangements; for instance, a train loaded with provisions was emptied by the orders of a colonel, who filled the trucks with his own regiment—and at that period, in Austria, the regiments were almost the property of the colonel; but it was deplorable to witness such short-sighted neglect of the needs of the army at the front.

On July 1, just a week after Solferino, I visited the battle-field, and shall never forget the sight. The carnage had been frightful. The Austrians lost in killed and wounded 13,000 men, and the French 10,000. Even at a distance

of seven miles, the stench was horrible, and imagination at its best, or worst, could scarcely exaggerate the horror of the scene. A few days later the French marched into Milan, and never did an army look in such admirable condition. I had arrived in the city shortly before the entry of the French troops, and in the evening of their arrival went to the opera at the Scala, where in the same box with me were some French officers. I was not long in discovering from their conversation that they were on the very worst terms with their comrades in arms, the Italians.

Meanwhile Milan was freed and Lombardy won, and Cavour, more than any one else, was the hero of the hour. Victor Emmanuel fully recognised this fact, and laughingly declared that, when driving with Cavour through the streets, he felt like the tenor at the opera when called upon to lead the prima donna to the front to receive the homage of the audience.

After the battle of Solferino, Napoleon was master of the situation, and when he found that the public rejoicings over the victory were linked with aspirations after national unity in Italy, he determined to cut short the war. His idea had never been to have a united Italy. All

he wanted south of the Alps was a number of small independent states, united by the thin bond of a confederacy, but divided by petty jealousies and rivalries, and powerless for good or evil. A confederacy of this nature existed in Germany, another in Switzerland, and a third in Italy would have completed a protective belt round the homogeneous, powerful, and solid French Empire, in whose sphere of influence it would have moved, and under whose control it would practically have been. The two Emperors met on July 11 at Villafranca, and, to the intense mortification of Cavour, the preliminaries of peace were drawn up, without even the presence of Victor Emmanuel. Lombardy was ceded to Sardinia, but Austria retained Venetia and the fortresses of Mantua, whilst France took Nice and Savoy, and the Grand Duke of Tuscany and the Duke of Modena were restored to power. It was officially announced, moreover, that the Emperor of Austria and the Emperor of the French would 'favour the creation of an Italian Confederation under the Holy Father.'

Two or three days after the armistice of Villafranca, the Emperor Napoleon, who was accompanied by his secretary, the Duke de

Gramont, and by M. Pietri, had an interview at Verona with Victor Emmanuel and Cavour. I happened to be in Verona, at the time the conference was held, with M. Talavaux, the eminent French engineer, and we were waiting to have an audience of the Emperor in connection with the Austro-Italian railways at the very moment when the King of Piedmont and his minister were engaged with Napoleon. At one point in the discussion Victor Emmanuel and Cavour left the room for the purpose of a private consultation, and I saw Victor Emmanuel, as the door was closed behind him, turn round and shake his fist against the room where the Emperor of the French and his secretary were sitting, making use of some violent expletives, as was his wont, against Napoleon.

On the conclusion of this peace, which ignored the aspirations of the Italian people, their indignation knew no bounds, and they determined to work out their own redemption, and did so, as all the world knows, in the autumn of 1860, when Victor Emmanuel was proclaimed King of Italy.

I knew Cavour long before this, for he frequently called at my office in Paris when I was in partnership, in the forties, with M. Charles

Laffitte, who was one of his old acquaintances. I always regarded him as a shrewd, astute man. He was of homely manners and plain appearance; his conversation, which was vigorous and intelligent, was enlivened by caustic wit. I met him frequently at dinner at the house of his brother, who was the Italian Senator. The latter was a most devout Catholic, and his outlook on life was altogether different.

After the conclusion of peace, I had frequent opportunities of meeting Cavour at Turin, at the house of Sir Hudson Lowe, the English Minister. He was far from working smoothly with the Italian agitators of the period, and especially with Garibaldi, who never forgave him the cession of Nice and Savoy to France. He was essentially a statesman, and as such understood the necessities of a policy of give and take in international relations. After Garibaldi's expedition to Naples and Sicily, Cavour found himself obliged to send an army into the Papal States, for, if he had not done so, Garibaldi, Dictator of the two Sicilies, would have invaded the domains of the Church, and created a situation which might mean European intervention, and endanger the possibility of uniting Italy. Napoleon III. forbade the taking

of Rome, but I gathered from Cavour's conversation that he would not in any case have taken Rome, for he always said: 'You must leave a people something to cry for.' Moreover, his motto was 'La Chiesa libera nello Stato libero,' and he knew enough of his countrymen to understand that, in the prevailing temper of Italy, neither the Church nor the State would have the liberty, which is a necessity of their existence, if Rome was wrested by force from the Pope.

Two or three years later—to be exact, in the spring of 1864—I was in London, and witnessed, from the windows of the Reform Club, the progress of Garibaldi through the streets, and the enthusiasm of the people. Mr. Doulton, of Lambeth, the head of the great pottery establishment, led the procession on horseback, and was followed by the Duchess of Sutherland in a landau, with Garibaldi seated by her side. I had seen him at Turin in 1859, and had been introduced to him, somewhat against my wish, by Baron Ricasoli, the Italian Premier.

Garibaldi was, as everybody knows, a *condottiere*, dressed always in uniform, scarlet and blue. As the procession passed the Reform Club, the band which accompanied Garibaldi

was playing 'La Marseillaise.' John Bright, who was also at the window, asked: 'What tune is that?' I mischievously answered 'The Rogue's March.' Bright looked round sharply, and exclaimed: 'Who said that?' I replied: 'I did;' but Mr. Bright said no more, and the matter dropped.

After the Austro-Italian war of 1859, and the annexation of the Papal States to the kingdom of Italy, I was charged, as banker to the Papal Government, to arrange the transfer of the financial liabilities of the Papal States to the new Italian Government and the conversion of the Papal debt. The negotiations took place in Paris, and for this purpose I was in communication with the Papal Nuncio, Cardinal Chigi, and with Count Nigra, the Italian Ambassador in Paris, who was not only a distinguished diplomatist, but also a *littérateur*, highly appreciated for his works on Italian poetry. The task was a most delicate one, and all the more difficult as the two plenipotentiaries would not meet face to face, and I had to go from the one to the other to act as an intermediary.

The Italian Government took over the Papal debt, and after long and most tedious negotiations

the terms were agreed upon; but when the draft agreement was submitted to the plenipotentiaries it was found to commence with the words 'Between the Roman Government under Pius IX., and the Italian States, represented by Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy.' When Cardinal Chigi saw this, he protested in most vehement terms, refused positively to sign the document, and broke off all negotiations, saying he would never recognise the claims of Victor Emmanuel to be called King of Italy. It then came to my recollection that, in order to get out of a similar difficulty with Austria, after the Peace of Verona, Cavour proposed that the Austrian States which were to be ceded to the new Italian kingdom should be transferred to France and by France to Italy. I followed this precedent, and so terminated the deadlock.

My banking house was charged with the execution of all the details of the conversion of the debt. It was a very laborious affair, worse perhaps than any conversion of Public Debt which has since taken place, as religious feeling and sentimentality were mixed with finance. Nearly all the holders of the Papal stock accepted the arrangement, but some refused to do so and

destroyed their bonds, preferring to lose their property rather than to take the Italian paper. This was a great error, even from their point of view, because in doing so they benefited the Italian Government. But their outraged feelings prevented them from seeing this, and there was no reasoning with them.

The question then arose whether the Italian Bonds which my bank held to exchange for Papal Bonds, and were not so exchanged owing to this scruple of some holders of Papal Bonds, should go back to the Italian Government or be handed over to the Vatican. I claimed the latter, but Count Nigra objected, and the point was submitted for arbitration to the French tribunals, who decided against my contention. The Papal Court paid me a commission for the work done, and this I also considered advisable to settle by arbitration.

My relations with Cardinal Chigi dated from a very early period. I first knew him when I was attached to the consulate in Rome in 1829. He was a member of an old and noble Roman family, and used in those days to attend balls and other social functions, and was very popular in Roman society. I afterwards knew him in Paris at various periods, after he had taken holy

orders and had become a priest. He was, for a time, attached to the Papal Nunciature in the French capital, and finally became Nuncio himself. He had an hotel in the Rue St. Dominique, where he frequently received, and was a great favourite with the aristocratic and Legitimist society of the Faubourg St. Germain.

One night, at a numerously attended official reception, when diplomatic discussions were in progress, I was asked to take a message from the Nuncio to M. Daru, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, who was at the moment in the same room. It was about the evacuation of Rome by the French troops, which was then under consideration by the French Government. The Nuncio remarked that Daru was an imbecile, and Daru retorted that the Nuncio was an ass. Thus my efforts came to an untimely end, at least for the moment.

The relations between Paris and Rome were rather strained, owing particularly to the attitude adopted by General Goyon, who was in command of the French troops garrisoning Rome, and missed no opportunity of making Pius IX. feel that he was of no account in his own capital. I remember, on the occasion of a grand celebration at St. Peter's, the service being

delayed and an immense crowd kept waiting a long time for no reason in particular except that it pleased the French commander to show at this moment that he was master of the situation.

The Italian war was hardly over when Napoleon III., who, by this time, had long forgotten his promise that the Imperial *régime* meant peace, embarked in the Mexican campaign. Just before the outbreak of the war, two Mexican bishops called upon me, on the introduction of a friend of the Empress Eugénie. They told me that they approached me because I had raised very large loans in former years for the Papal Government. They wanted to know whether it would be possible to obtain from my clients who had subscribed to such loans, subscriptions to a Mexican loan, to aid an invasion of Mexico by the French in order to put Maximilian, the younger brother of Francis Joseph, Emperor of Austria, on the throne. This scheme, which was governed by the idea that, if Mexico was conquered, French interests, and therefore Catholic power, would be predominant, had the strong support of the Empress Eugénie. I was convinced that no satisfactory reply would be got from the subscribers to the Papal

Loans, and therefore declined the invitation to finance the expedition.

At the commencement of the war a contract was advertised for the delivery of rails, coals, provisions, &c. I tendered, and my tender was accepted, although at the outset I had some difficulty, because objections were raised to my nationality. This was over-ruled in the end, because my tender was far below that of any other contractor, though it left me a large profit. Payments, however, were made at long intervals and with much difficulty, as money was not at that time plentiful with the French Government. One of my colleagues in the Cherbourg Railway, M. de Chasseloup-Laubat, who was Minister of Marine, signed the orders to pay me.

The French army fought admirably, but the war being a guerilla one, their task was difficult, and could not be carried out without resorting to measures of extreme severity. General de Galliffet, who has so often distinguished himself, served at that time under Marshal Bazaine, with great distinction. Whilst I am writing these Memoirs, his name has come prominently before the public. I have been General de Galliffet's intimate friend from his boyhood up to the present moment. A more gallant soldier

never existed. His father, the old Marquis, objected to his son entering the army, and therefore Galliffet, when young, was not allowed to enter St. Cyr. No other career had any attractions for him, and as his father's attitude made it impossible for him to be trained at that military college, he cut the knot by enlisting as a common soldier.

On the principle of promotion by merit in days when fighting was rife, Galliffet quickly got his lieutenant's commission, and, once an officer, his fine military qualities made it plain that success in his self-chosen calling was assured. He was decorated on the battle-field in the Crimea, and when the Mexican war broke out, he fought with conspicuous skill as well as valour. He was desperately wounded at the battle of La Puebla. He was struck by a spent shell in the abdomen, and the wound he received was so terrible that, but for his presence of mind in binding himself at once with a blanket, he must have bled to death in a few moments. Surgical aid only reached him in the nick of time, and ever since he has worn a silver plaque as a grim memorial of his narrow escape.

General de Galliffet had nothing to do with the

abandonment of the Emperor Maximilian. The truth is, the Emperor would not consent to leave, in spite of strong expostulations and entreaties, and, at last, almost the use of stronger measures on the part of his French military advisers. It had been alleged that the ambition of his wife, the unfortunate Empress Charlotte, had something to do with this determination. However that may be, the delay proved fatal, and the dream of a Mexican Empire sank with Maximilian's lifeless body in the ditch of Queretaro.

Many have attempted to make the Duc de Morny responsible for the unfortunate Mexican campaign. It has even been said that, when the Mexican Government repudiated the arrangement by which President Miramon, in want of money, gave the banker Jecker over fourteen millions of francs in Treasury Bonds in order to obtain an advance of less than four million francs, and replaced the Internal Mexican Debt Bonds by bonds issued by Jecker and amounting to something like eighty million francs, Morny agreed to use his influence to get the French Government to back up the banker's claim against an undertaking that he would receive thirty per cent. of the money recovered.

Such a thing is extremely improbable. The intervention of France was due to the intrigues of the Mexican clerical party, to the desire of France to create in North America a Latin Empire which could check and counterbalance the growing influence of the United States, and perhaps to some secret ambition on the part of Napoleon III. to be, like Napoleon I., a maker of empires and a giver of thrones.

I was intimately acquainted at the Union Club and elsewhere with the Duc de Morny, who, with Persigny, was the real creator of the Empire. When Louis Napoleon, still President of the Republic, visited the provinces, he organised the journey and started the cry of 'Vive l'Empereur.' This was the case at Lyons, where Maréchal Castellane was Governor. Castellane, by the way, was a valiant soldier, but very original. He used to give audiences when in his bath, with his *bâton de maréchal* lying across him.

Morny was a man who was very much liked by some and disliked by others. He was a man of pleasure, a *grand seigneur*, and a business man in his way. He was one of the first public men in France to take an interest in the sugar industry, and engaged extensively in beet-grow-

ing. He was also the founder of the watering place of Deauville, near Trouville. He used to play a good deal at the Bourse, but rather affected ignorance of Stock Exchange transactions, and I remember sitting next to him on the occasion of a meeting of financiers, when he turned to me and asked me to explain to him the difference between the *marché à terme* and the *marché au comptant*. I looked at him and smiled, and evaded the question. When the Duc de Morny went as Special Envoy to Russia for the coronation of the Emperor Alexander in 1857, he displayed great magnificence and pomp. One of his ideas was to procure as many good-looking coachmen, grooms, postillions, &c., as possible to take with him for the ceremony. He came to my place and took away two of my stable-boys by the offer of twenty louis apiece. A member of my family expressed displeasure at this behaviour, but the Duc, with his usual good humour, allayed all irritation.

He was a most pleasing, brilliant, and charming man, and liked by most of those who came into personal contact with him, except when political feeling ran high. He was one of the founders of the Railway Club, at which he

presided as chairman. The voting power for the election of members was completely, and is still, confined to the committee, and one black ball is sufficient to exclude. On one occasion, he proposed a gentleman bearing the name of an excellent Cornish family. When he asked me for information concerning him, I gave a satisfactory account, but it subsequently came across my mind that he had certain equivocal relations in high places, and I advised Morny before the meeting. When the ballot box was opened all the balls, with the exception of one, were white. Thereupon Morny said, 'C'est moi qui ai donné la boule noire, croyant que tout le monde avait donné des blanches à cause de moi.'

Count Walewski, whose name has come often under my pen in these Memoirs, was a man of the world in every respect, and, like M. de Morny, one of the founders of the Empire. Politics smiled upon him more than literature, for his early attempts in the latter field were not crowned with success. I remember the excitement caused in the early forties by the production of a play of his at the Théâtre-Français, 'L'École du Monde,' which had been praised beforehand, but was a signal failure. It is seldom that a wealthy society-man shines in

literature. He came down to the Union after the performance, and expected to be congratulated by Montrout, the wit of the club; but his fellow clubmen were quite as severe as the public. 'Étiez-vous donc obligé d'écrire une comédie?' asked Montrout. 'Pourquoi n'avez-vous pas mis plus d'esprit dans le quatrième acte?' asked another, whilst somebody who was not a poet tried to console poor Walewski by assuring him that it was not given to every gentleman to be a poet when he wanted, and that, should necessity arise, a poet had even better chances of becoming a gentleman.

Walewski had met Napoleon in exile in England, and was, moreover, a great friend of Palmerston's. At the election of the son of Queen Hortense, he was received with open arms at the Elysée, and then sent as Ambassador to England. He was in Napoleon's secret, and his mission to England was to facilitate the success of the proposed *coup d'état* by securing the immediate recognition of the new *régime* by the English Government, and thus, so to speak, forcing the hand of the other Powers who might be inclined to reserve their adhesion to a government so irregularly established. Walewski's intimate friendship with Palmerston, then

Foreign Minister, was calculated to obtain this end; and indeed, as soon as Palmerston was advised of the *coup d'état*, he hastened to recognise officially, in the name of England, the new *régime* in France, without even consulting his colleagues of the Cabinet. This caused a Cabinet crisis, in consequence of which the Queen dismissed Palmerston from his office.

Walewski, a few years afterwards, was made Minister for Foreign Affairs by Napoleon, and, to a large extent, the friendly relations between England and France during the palmy days of the Empire may be traced to his influence. He was of a conciliatory disposition, and always endeavoured to smooth over difficulties. By birth a Pole, he was naturalised French, and in his youth had taken part in a Polish insurrection against Russia. He died before the Franco-Prussian war broke out.

I was an intimate friend of M. Rouher, the famous Minister of Napoleon III. I do not think I ever met a more astute politician than the Minister of Commerce, Agriculture, and Public Works, who negotiated the Free Trade treaty with Cobden in 1860. Rouher was frank, and even communicative, and we frequently travelled together on the journey between his

country-house, near Brunoy, and Paris. On these occasions he was very agreeable, and talked freely of the questions which were then engaging our attention. I had ample opportunities of testing his business capacity, for, as a banker and a railway director, I was brought into intimate association with him over financial problems, and also in regard to railway development in France, which he did much to foster. He was strongly in favour of the policy of Free Trade, and, like Cobden, he regarded the treaty of 1860 as merely a step towards bringing France and England to an exchange of produce unfettered by Customs duties.

While he was at the Ministry of Public Works, I saw him almost daily, and he was so persuasive that it was impossible to resist what he wished. For instance, he persuaded me on two occasions to put in order two unfortunate affairs, called, one the Compagnie Chauxfournière de l'Ouest, and the other Compagnie des Polders de l'Ouest, which constituted at that time a heavy loss to me and others who joined me, but have both turned out fairly successful by perseverance. The latter has been visited by many noted agriculturists from England; amongst others by Mr. Jesse Collings, who was struck

with admiration at the success of the undertaking.

A large expanse of land, formerly covered by the sea, is now under magnificent cultivation and producing a large revenue. The method adopted was practically the same as that followed in Holland for the reclamation of land from the sea. When the company undertook this work, I wrote to my English friends to ask them to take an interest in it. The replies received were not very encouraging. Among others, Sir William Tite, the architect of the Royal Exchange, London, assured me that he could not understand how I could undertake to carry to a successful issue a project which Julius Cæsar had tried in vain to accomplish. These works are on the Normandy coast, near Pontorson.

Rouher's ability as a speaker was remarkable, but of this one instance must suffice. Just before the declaration of war in 1870, he received instructions from the Tuileries to make a speech in the Senate, of which he was then President, in favour of the maintenance of peace. Immediately before the Senate met, the Emperor told him that he must, at a moment's notice, alter his tactics and make a warlike oration, and, with his usual ability, Rouher rose to the occasion.

It must always be remembered that he was a barrister, and therefore brought up to plead either for or against, as the case might be.

Rouher was always very slovenly dressed when busy in his office; indeed, I do not think I ever saw any man of his position more careless in that respect. He used to sit in his room at the Ministry of Public Works and receive visitors scarcely more than half dressed, and was always in his slippers. Under the table was a big dog, which was accustomed to play with his feet. His treatment by the public after the fall of the Empire was infamous. He was surrounded by a hostile mob at Boulogne-sur-Mer, and it was with difficulty that his life was saved.

M. Pierre Magne, Minister of Finances during the Empire and during the early period of the Republic, was a man of the highest ability, courageous and tenacious under the most trying circumstances. Owing to the, not always wise, way in which public money was spent during the Empire, his position as Minister of Finances was a most difficult one, and he had often to take measures of which, as the genuine and enlightened financier he was, he could not but disapprove. As Minister of Finances, M. Pierre Magne was, with M. Rouher, chiefly responsible

for the policy followed by the Second Empire in the matter of railway construction, and in the authorisation of the amalgamation of small separate companies into the big companies now in existence.

He strove hard, however, to keep a happy medium between those who, like M. de Morny, were inclined to advocate a kind of Railway Trust, and those who thought that a system of small independent and competing companies would be an advantage to the public. 'We must not forget that railways are made for the benefit of the public,' he used to repeat, 'and not the public for the benefit of railways.' He was chiefly responsible for preventing the absorption of the lines forming the Orleans Railway by the Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée Company, in which I was interested. On one occasion I had a slight difference with him, and rather avoided getting into the same carriage on the Lyons Railway. He called to me and said: 'Ne boudez pas, mais quand vous voudrez faire de l'esprit vous pourrez peut-être trouver une autre victime que moi. Rouher m'a dit que vous avez dit, parlant de moi, à propos de l'hôtel que l'Empereur m'a donné, que je savais faire toutes espèces de sacrifices pour l'autel de la patrie.'

Magne said this to me in the best of humours, for he was the most amiable of men, and never found fault without begging your pardon. His reputation was so high that, after the fall of the Empire, the Republican Government did not hesitate to keep him as Minister of Finances, and he was entrusted with the reorganisation of the French Exchequer after the cataclysm caused by the war and the payment of the indemnity to Germany. His indomitable energy stood him in good stead in these difficult times. The leading financiers saw him when everything seemed financially irretrievable, and he urged us not to despair of the recuperative powers of finance. 'Luttez, luttez, Messieurs, et on viendra à bout de tout,' he used to repeat. But he did not limit himself to empty words of encouragement, and the practical advice he gave was of the greatest value.

M. de Persigny, who was Minister of the Interior, is famous as the organiser of the 'Préfets à poigne,' whose duty it was to look after the interests of the Government in the provinces, to prevent the election to Parliament, or to public offices, of candidates opposed to the Imperial *régime*, and generally to prevent the Republicans from raising their head. He drew

up, or, at all events, directly inspired, the stringent press laws which were then enforced.

There was no freedom of the press in France under the Empire. M. de Persigny once sent for the heads of the principal newspapers in Paris, and told them that the Emperor forbade any attacks against foreign Powers. Thereupon John Lemoinne, the famous foreign editor of the 'Débats,' who, by the way, was born and educated in England, got up and said, 'Then what are we to write about?' The Minister thought for a moment, and then replied: 'Mais, mes amis, il vous reste l'Angleterre! Vous pouvez dire ce que vous voudrez des Anglais, parce qu'ils s'en moquent.'

Perhaps a better idea of the extent to which the Government interfered with the press, even in the smallest details, will be gathered from what happened once to the 'Figaro.' M. de Villemessant's paper, having published a paragraph calling attention to the fact that, on a certain occasion, the lamp-lighters were rather late in lighting up the lamps on the Boulevard du Prince Eugène, immediately received a stiff rebuff from the Ministry of the Interior in the shape of a *communiqué* stating that 'one could only explain the error in which the writer of the

article had fallen by assuming that he passed on the Boulevard du Prince Eugène before the regular hour for lighting the lamps, but that he was not entitled to deduce from this fact that the lamps would not be lighted at the proper time.

French Governments seem never to have been able to strike a happy medium in their dealings with the press. Newspapers were submitted to the most vexatious interference under one *régime* and entirely unbridled under another. In the exercise of their newly acquired liberty, they frequently overstepped all bounds, with results often disastrous to the country. I am of opinion that the war of 1870 was largely, if not mainly, due to the irresponsible, ignorant, and passionate utterances and incitements of too large a section of the press, who did their best to work up public opinion to a frenzy.

CHAPTER IX

THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR AND THE SIEGE OF PARIS

Immediately before the outbreak of the Franco-German war, M. Ollivier, chief of the French Cabinet, had publicly declared that 'at no time was the peace of Europe so assured as at present.' This statement was made on the 30th of June, 1870, and on the 19th of July the French declaration of war against Germany was delivered in Berlin. A pretext was looked for by the Emperor Napoleon for such a step, and this was found in an account of what took place between the old King of Prussia and Count Benedetti, the French Ambassador in Berlin, when they met at Ems early in July. It was said that the King, meeting Benedetti at the Kursaal, refused to take any notice of him. This was quite untrue, as I heard afterwards from Benedetti himself; but owing to the attitude adopted by France in the question of the Spanish succession in compelling the withdrawal of the Hohen-

zollern candidate to the throne of Spain, the relations between the two countries were so strained that both the French and the Prussians were eager for a pretext to commence hostilities.

Bismarck was especially anxious to provide such a pretext at that moment, for he knew better than the French themselves the state of disorganisation of their army, and saw his opportunity of humiliating France and of consolidating the German Empire, which had been his dream. The old King and Queen, and the future Emperor Frederick, were in favour of peace, but by a skilful manipulation of despatches, which is now admitted, Bismarck goaded the French into declaring war, and set at naught the influences which were at work in Berlin in favour of peace.

I remember well the state of feeling in Paris at the time negotiations were pending at Ems. One night the Duc de Gramont, then Foreign Minister, came hurriedly to the Cercle de l'Union on the Boulevard de la Madeleine, where a great number of public men were assembled, and announced that war had been declared, news which, though not unexpected, was received with great emotion. Tidings of

battle came swiftly : Mars-la-Tour, and two days later Gravelotte, at which the loss of life on both sides was terrible, and finally the crowning disaster of Sedan. The war was actually over in a month, for it was on August 2 that the King of Prussia placed himself at the head of his army at Mayence, and exactly a month later Napoleon surrendered his sword. The station-master at Combes-la-Villette told me, before tidings reached Paris, that the French were in retreat.

When my family arrived from Tigery, where they had been since the beginning of hostilities, they brought with them not merely two horses, but two cows, and the latter proved, as will be seen when my narrative reaches another stage, of great service during the siege. My son Aston was present at Sedan as a Red Cross Knight, and after the battle he exchanged a few words with the Emperor. He described to me the broken and dejected appearance of Napoleon III. on the morrow of that decisive battle. Napoleon looked downcast, and when my son volunteered to do anything that he wished in Paris he smiled bitterly, and exclaimed: 'Tout est fini pour moi. Le Roi de Prusse se charge de moi.' These words were

afterwards most unjustly criticised by the opponents of the Emperor.

Whilst this conversation was in progress, my son was suspiciously scanned by two Prussian officers, and, on his riding away, the two officers put spurs to their horses and pursued him as far as the Belgian frontier. On reaching it, all three found that they had met before in Paris. 'We know you well,' they said to my son, 'and congratulate you on your mount.' The horse, which was General Galliffet's, was there entrusted to a trainer's man from Chantilly, an Englishman, whom my son requested to take the horse back to Paris when he could. We thought we should never see the horse again, but, after the proclamation of peace, one morning when we were at lunch in my house in Paris, General Galliffet, by chance, being with us, we saw the man ride the horse, with all its military accoutrements, into the yard.

It was on Friday, September 2, 1870, that Napoleon III., with an army of eighty-six thousand men, surrendered at Sedan to the German invaders of France. Tidings of this crowning disaster reached Paris at midnight on Saturday. The populace, if not the ministry, was taken utterly by surprise; and the rage, excitement, and

indignation were indescribable. The downfall of the Empire came in twenty-four hours, and without the shedding in the streets of Paris of a drop of blood, and before that memorable Sunday closed, Gambetta proclaimed the Republic from one of the windows of the Hôtel de Ville, and the Government of the National Defence sprang into existence.

The Prussians at once marched on Paris, for Bismarck was determined to lay siege to the capital. 'The French,' he exclaimed, 'will hate us with undying hate, and we must take care to render this hate powerless.' He made no secret that Prussia was determined to have Metz and Strasburg. The bayonets of Germany were to make an iron ring-fence round Paris, and the people, whom one heard shouting frantically only a few weeks before, 'À Berlin en huit jours,' were to find themselves reduced to impotence, and left, as Bismarck contemptuously put it, 'to stew in their own juice.'

The outlook was so disquieting that I determined to get my wife and family out of Paris without further delay. They accordingly left within a week of the fall of Sedan, and got safely to Villandry, near Tours. My first letter after they left was written on September 8,

and in it I said that the American Minister was anxious for peace, especially as his Government had promptly recognised the Republic. Even at that date, the mob of Belleville was beginning to take up a menacing attitude against General Trochu. Two days later I reported that the Ambassadors were doing all they could to bring about the conclusion of peace, but that the news from the provinces was bad. 'The "red flag" floats at Lyons,' I said, 'and there are disturbances at Havre and Bordeaux. Here everybody is *triste*, and one hears few people singing the "Marseillaise." The Tuileries and Champs-Élysées are full of troops.'

Three days later I wrote again, and, though it was only on September 13, we were already beginning to speculate where the first cannon-ball would fall, for the Prussians were very near Paris, though the forts were not yet taken. I added:

There has been a great review to-day, and the Mobiles look much better than the troops that we saw leave a month ago. At any rate they do not get drunk and straggle out of the ranks. The gates are to be shut on Thursday except for persons provided with 'permis.' Lord Lyons does not go to Tours, but stays here. Great efforts are being made for peace. They may succeed if the King of Prussia is moderate.

It was at this juncture that I wrote to a personal friend in an official position in London the following account of the existing situation:—

Paris, September 13th, 1870.

I have not written to you before; the reason has been that I feel it totally impossible to convey to anybody the state we are in here. The past seems like a frightful dream; the present is impossible to describe. To-day we had a grand review of at least a hundred and fifty thousand men, if not two hundred thousand—the greatest portion the Garde Nationale of Paris and Garde Mobile of the provinces. The former are well clothed, well armed, and look in famous order and spirits. The latter are admirable. Exercised in ten days, they have learnt their trade and are far superior in appearance to the regular troops that left to meet the Prussians. They are well behaved, quiet, no drunkenness. The churches are full of them on Sunday; I have had twelve of them in my house for the last eight days, and I never saw a more respectable corps. They are now all armed and disciplined. They have the spirit of obedience which the army lacked completely. Can they defend Paris? I believe they can for some time to come, and that the Prussians will find them tougher to deal with than any they have met with as yet. Negotiations are going on for peace, but remember what I say, the French will not accept dishonourable conditions—I mean by this, surrender of territory or ships. They would rather fight to the end, and, when Paris is lost, retreat to the last fortress left in France. They would pay money, as public opinion

acknowledges that the last Government began an unjust war. But more than this, neither the Government now constituted, nor any other, could make people accept. Indeed, no peace would be lasting if France cedes territory, for no time would make either the present generation or the future accept the cession. It would be perpetual danger of war. The 'Times' writes the contrary, but I have been forty years in this country, and know the people better.

Now what is doing about the peace?

I believe that the foreign Ambassadors are doing all they can. Our Ambassador, Lord Lyons, knowing as I do the qualities which adorn his character, must be using every effort to stop more bloodshed, ruin, and devastation, but what is our Government doing? What is Lord Granville doing? Does he think that the majority of the English nation will ever pardon a Government which shows culpable apathy at such a moment?

You may be sure that a continuation of this war is fraught with danger to every constituted Government in Europe, and to none more than to our own. Has France for the last twenty years ever been false to England, and will she ever pardon those who abandon her in her direst moments? Let Mr. Gladstone ponder over this. Starring in the provinces is necessary for singers and actors, but is it worthy of a Prime Minister at such a moment? Pray pardon me if I pour out my indignation upon you. I owe something to this generous and valiant nation, and if a forty years' residence in this country can give any weight to my words, it will be but a poor return.

Most truly yours, EDWARD BLOUNT.

My wife was naturally anxious that I should leave Paris before it was too late, but I felt it was my duty to stay, and in the following letter justified my decision.

Paris, 14th September, 1870.

It is totally impossible for me to leave Paris. If I leave the Bank, all the others will lose courage. At the Société Générale there remain five of us, and if I leave, you may be perfectly sure that everybody will lose courage. At the Lyons and Western Railway I cannot do much, but my presence encourages others. I can assure you that I do most sincerely wish that I was out of Paris, but I should feel that I was deserting my post if I went. Others may think proper to do so—many of them cannot exercise the authority that I can; in fine, if I went, I feel that it would be wrong, and would do a deal of mischief. I wrote to the 'Times' yesterday to the above effect, as they had intimated that all the influential bankers were gone to Boulogne.

There are real efforts for peace. The only question is, can the King of Prussia make peace on reasonable terms, or can the Government accept what may seem to us reasonable terms? The town is quiet. It is very difficult to give an opinion of the defence of Paris. I believe the forts can hold out for some time, and the town for some time longer. I have heard of very few outrages here. An attack was attempted upon the Jesuits at Vaugirard, but the 'Garde Nationale,' with my friend Martignac the Admiral at their head, drove the scamps away.

The next day the railways out of Paris to the north, east, and south were stopped. The bridges of Corbeil and Melun were blown up, and the Garde Mobile retreating in hot haste towards Paris. It was now the middle of September, and I wrote :—

It is said that the King of Prussia's head-quarters will be at Ferrières, the large and magnificent property belonging to Baron Rothschild, where the first negotiations between Jules Favre and Bismarck, which concluded nothing, took place ; and then at St. Germain or Versailles.

I still have some hopes that we shall not be besieged. Mr. Mallet [1] is gone to the King of Prussia to ask him his conditions. If he asks moderate ones they will be accepted, but the French will not sacrifice territory. In my opinion Paris will make a good defence. You can have no idea of the aspect of the town—all soldiers. The Garde Mobile from the distant provinces is good. The men are steady, active, and obedient. The Parisians are middling, and those from the environs of Paris, many of them pillagers and nothing else.

I find my life wearisome, but my spirits are generally pretty good, and I have plenty of energy and courage. I do not suppose that I run much danger from Prussian projectiles. Our dangers are the Reds, and they are very boisterous. I fear there is no chance of peace. Mr. Mallet is gone with despatches from French, English, and Russian Governments to the King

[1] First Secretary of the British Embassy.

of Prussia, but he will reply that he cannot treat with the present French Government without guarantees for the execution of the terms of the treaty. In this he is right, but the French Government will not give guarantees. Besides, the Government here does not dare make any concessions. The sensible and upper classes would, but the people will not, and therefore we must fight it out.

Lord Lyons left Paris for Tours on September 17, and by that time the Rouen line was cut, and on the following day, if I remember rightly, the last train left Paris. I had taken up my abode at the Hôtel Meurice.

Paris, 20th September, 1870.

We are very quiet here and there is no fighting. Paris is quite prepared, and I suppose the cannonade will begin in a day or two. I hope that France is rising to come to our rescue. Really the conduct of the people is admirable, and they will defend themselves heroically. The King of Prussia has gone too far, and is tempting Providence. It is terrible not having any news of any of you; I fear I shall be very short of fodder for the cows and horses soon. We are pretty well off for provisions, but butter and milk are getting scarce. This is to go, I hope, by balloon.

The next letter bears date Sunday, September 25, and was written by my son Aston, who was with me, to his mother at Arcachon.

This letter will, I hope, reach you by the

balloon. We expect every day an attack from the Prussians. I do not know how long we will be able to stand out, but things look much better, and I think they will be long before getting in. Papa is all right, and in good spirits. Very few people left here, and everybody who remains is in the Garde Nationale doing duty on the ramparts. I think it will be very warm work. It is a wonderful sight now. Lots of people are about in the streets. The evenings are awfully dreary. The cafés and shops are all shut at night.

I wrote myself the next day:—

Paris is quiet and full of hope. We are short of provisions, but milk and butter are getting scarce. Do not be too uneasy about me. I saw Abbé Miquel yesterday. I see Wodehouse, Claremont, and Hore[1] every day. I wrote a letter to the 'Standard,' which has been translated into all the French papers, and has had great effect. I was right, and my friends who went away were wrong. Love to Alice, and tell the children to say a prayer for me every night.

I was now quite uncertain as to the fate of my letters, for one could never be sure that they would not fall into the enemy's hands, and therefore it did not do to say too much. The uncertainty made me write constantly, for I felt that some at least of my letters would reach my wife's hands and allay her suspense.

[1] Attachés of the British Embassy.

Paris, 27th September, 1870.

Do not be too much alarmed about us. The town is quite quiet. There is great enthusiasm, and much hope. We are naturally cut off from all communication, the Prussians surrounding us on all sides, and we can receive no news, but balloons go daily. I am glad I stayed here—it was my duty to do so, and I have been able to keep up the courage of all my subordinates. Really the effort this country is making is astounding. All of every class, nobles, priests, and people are doing their duty nobly. May Providence aid us, and we shall get through our troubles. I really think that the King of Prussia is pushing his rights too far as a conqueror, but I must say no more on this head, as it would not be prudent.

Nothing happened during the next few days. The populace began to recognise that the provinces were doing nothing, and discouragement prevailed. Paris might resist bombs, but not starvation, and already prices were ominously high. The Government by this time had issued a decree, compelling all dealers in flour to sell it to the authorities at a stipulated price. General Trochu was doing his best to bring the troops to discipline, and the Mobile Breton peasants, for the most part, though rough enough material, were beginning to set an example of military order to the National Guards. Meanwhile barricades

were rising all round the city, little or no work was in progress, and officials were beginning to count not only the sheep and oxen, but also the horses.

3, Rue de la Paix, 4th October, 1870.

This is to go by an English courier to Tours. I hope some of my letters have arrived safely. I know nothing about any of you, as I have not received a single letter since Paris was invested. I can only hope that you are all well; I and Aston are completely so. We get enough to eat, but no variety. There is great difficulty in getting all one wants for the Rue de Courcelles, but I have now butter brought to me from our cows. It is dreadfully dull here, and we have anxious times. I am to be elected a temporary member of the Jockey Club. At the Union there is scarcely any one, and if the diplomatists all go, there will be nobody. It is impossible to say how long all this will last. Paris can and will hold out for a long time.

We knew by this time that Toul and Strasbourg had fallen, and this heightened the prevailing depression. In view of this disaster, Gambetta issued a proclamation, in which he said that in falling, Toul and Strasbourg 'cast a glance towards Paris and leave us, as a legacy, the duty to deliver them, the honour to avenge them.'

The following note from my son Aston explains itself:—

Sunday, 8th October, 1870.

My dearest mother,—I have not written to you, because I never believed letters arrived, but now I know it I drop a few lines. We are in an awful mess—God knows how it will end. Truce is the only thing, but obstinate people and selfish Government put a stop to it. I go about a great deal, and have seen as much. Fighting is now on, the troops will have it. The country is going to complete ruin, and useless loss of life. My father is quite well, and I see him at the Club when at dinner a great deal, and he is much liked and appreciated. Everybody much pleased with his staying here. I hope to see you for Christmas.

Your affectionate son,
ASTON.

I accompanied, in these anxious weeks of October, a good number of persons, who desired to leave Paris, to what we called the 'frontiers,' or, in other words, the outposts of the contending armies. Amongst them was the Papal Nuncio Mgr. Chigi. I went, early in the morning, to his hotel in the Faubourg St. Germain to fetch him, and found him in full canonicals, attended by his Secretary of Legation and two other members of his suite. I followed their carriage in the phaeton, and after us came a few English people for whom I had obtained permission to leave Paris. The morning was

bitterly cold, and a very hard frost was on the ground. When we arrived at the outposts, it was necessary to get the Nuncio's carriage through, which was managed by the Breton Mobiles. On reaching the Prussian lines the Nuncio rose and gave a pontifical blessing to the French Guard, who remained standing, and then repeated the same benediction to the Prussians, who all went down on their knees.

Whilst I was on the German side, I had some talk with the officers, and observed an officer who evidently showed that he had some desire to attract my attention. Approaching me, he put into my hands, which I held behind my back, a packet of letters for people in Paris. Had this been noticed by any higher official, he would have been put under arrest, and perhaps shot, by virtue of martial law. There were letters for many of my friends, but alas! there was not one for me. They were distributed by my care the same night to the persons to whom they were addressed.

Paris, 19th October, 1870.

I dine at the Jockey Club, and once a week with Madame de Vatry and once with M. Herpin, Directeur de la Société Générale. I have to subscribe so much a day for the poor, for there is great misery. Everything is quiet here, and

there is no danger of disturbance as long as the Prussians besiege us. We hear a great deal of cannon. They cannot take Paris, and there are provisions of one sort or another for at least two months. Should the provinces rise, the Prussians will be beaten. I think they must begin to have enough of it. You may imagine that it is very dull, and it is dreadful having no news of any one for five weeks. I saw the 'Times' of the 8th, and correspondence therein from Lyons, Orleans, and Tours, which was not good. Here the naval attaché could not get through the lines, and returned. As far as I am concerned I will stay it out, and am resigned for six weeks at least.

A day or two later I wrote:—

We have had anxious times here. Last night there was a tremendous demonstration at the Hôtel de Ville. The Government was besieged for many hours, and only released at two in the morning. Flourens, who afterwards was killed in one of the first engagements of the Commune, was master, and, after all, Trochu and Jules Favre were obliged to treat with him. The majority of the Garde Nationale behaved well. I was at the État Major until half-past two, and the noise in the Rue de la Paix when Trochu passed at three was awful. To-day everything is relatively quiet, but on Thursday there is to be a vote for preservation or abandonment of the Government. Since the capitulation of Metz everybody looks upon the case as desperate, and we hope that the armistice will be accepted.

The terms of a proposed armistice were now under discussion, and it was said that Bismarck had offered to cry halt for twenty-five days, in order that a constituent assembly might be convoked, but, as everybody knows, the negotiations came to nothing.

I then wrote :—

As usual there has been a large majority for the Government, and to-day there is a vote for the election of the Maires of the City of Paris, which will finish in the same manner.

Mons. Thiers returned to Versailles two days ago, and will, I suppose, be back here to-night to inform us whether the terms of an armistice can be agreed upon. We all wish for it here, as we have no doubt that it would lead to peace. Indeed, the war could not be begun again by either party. Should the King of Prussia insist upon entering Paris, or refuse to allow Alsace and Lorraine to vote, there will be no armistice, and we shall have at the same time more of this horrible state of affairs. These absurd and wicked pretensions of Prussia will turn against her sooner or later, and should France be obliged to yield territory, the peace will not be lasting.

I am very well, and so is Aston; as I have killed one cow we have all now enough to eat. I am comfortable in the Rue de la Paix, and Madame Baptiste takes great care of me. I dine at the Club, where there are generally a good many people.

Three days later I wrote to my son Henry,

telling him that a letter just received was the first news I had had about any of my family for more than six weeks. I added :—

At times I am very low, but in general keep up my spirits. I have the satisfaction of knowing that I am doing my duty, and that my presence here has been of use to all the affairs in which I am concerned. I lived for six weeks at the Hôtel Meurice, but am now residing in the Rue de la Paix, and Madame Baptiste takes great care of me. I have plenty to eat, and particularly at present, as I have just killed one of my cows. I dine at the Jockey Club, of which I am a temporary member ; there are about forty at dinner there every day. Charles and Edward de Fitz-James, two Biencourts, two de Ganays, Breteuil, Sagan, Vigier, Daru, Dillon, Plaisance, Duperré, Saint Priest, Guy de Bonne-val, Pillet-Will, two Hottinguers, 'Duc Charles,' two Lauristons, Rothschilds, and others.

I found the Union too dull, and now, as the rest of the diplomats are gone to-day, it will be worse than ever. A crowd of foreigners have left this morning. I mean to stay as long as I can be of any use, and I suppose that this will be the end of the siege. Everything is relatively quiet here now, but we have had alarming days and nights. I spent one at the État Major in the Place Vendôme, and it was far from pleasant. There has been very little fighting for the last few days. I still hope for peace, but our miseries will not be then over, for this war will leave frightful distress behind it, and we shall all have to suffer for past follies.

It was at this time I first met the Marquis, now third Duc de Bassano, the grandson of the celebrated statesman of the First Empire, who made the title historic. At the outbreak of the Franco-German war, the present Duc was a young diplomatist, and held the post of Secretary of the French Embassy at Constantinople. When war was declared he returned, with patriotic ardour, to Paris, and distinguished himself in military operations for the defence of the capital. The marriage of my grandson Edward to his daughter Clara, which took place in 1897, was to me a great satisfaction, and her residence under my roof at Imberhorne is a continual solace. After the proclamation of the Republic his father, the late Duc de Bassano, followed the Imperial family into exile, and won the respect of all by chivalrous devotion to Napoleon III., and afterwards to the Empress Eugénie. He it was who broke the heavy tidings to the Empress of the death of the Prince Imperial—June 1st, 1879—with the British Army in Zululand, and the present Duc shortly afterwards accompanied her on her sad pilgrimage to the scene of her son's untimely death.

But to return. The next letter I wrote to my wife was on November 8 :—

You will have heard about two dreadful battles we had at the beginning of the month. I think the Prussians were severely punished, but the French losses were heavy, and I can assure you that it is very distressing to see this bloodshed and misery. It is all useless, for if the Prussians take Paris they will be no further advanced. We know of no details of what took place at Orleans. Moltke writes to Trochu that the French were defeated. It may be so, but that will not make Paris surrender one moment sooner. We are expecting another battle every day, and it will be awful, for the troops here will now fight well. The Garde Nationale seems determined. The new battalions are very fine young men, well armed and equipped. Food is still sufficient, but no fresh meat. My salted cow is a God-send.

By the beginning of November some of the newspapers were beginning to talk of the necessity of putting all the provisions into a common stock, and placing each citizen on strict rations. Everybody by this time had had about enough of it, no one more than myself. All sorts of rumours were flying about, concerning an armistice, but meanwhile the blockade was more strict than ever, and the shoe was beginning to pinch.

17th November, 1870.

I have seen the 'Times' newspaper up to the 3rd of November, from which I gather that there is abominable confusion all over France.

Paris can stand out for two months more. There are still dealt out portions of meat, and will be for a few days longer. Then we still have salt meat, etc. I still have fresh meat of the cow I killed, for breakfast, and milk and butter from the one still living. I have still food for her, and besides, Pauline, or Clementine, lets her feed in the garden on the little grass there is left. We dine well at the Jockey Club. In fine, we get enough, and people do not complain.

What is most painful is the absence of all intelligence from without, both private and public. We are left to conjecture. The town is now quite quiet, but dull in the extreme. Nearly all the shops are shut. There are no carriages about, and little light at night. The cannonading is continuous, all on the side of the French, for the Prussians do not even reply. The Francs-Tireurs continue to shoot at random, and the 'Maraudeurs' have destroyed everything round Paris. The army is now 'prête' here, and cannon delivered every day. I suppose that a battle must be fought soon. Everybody here is disgusted with the Tours Government, Gambetta, and Crémieux. Their last exploit concerning Bazaine is infamous. They seem determined to sacrifice France, and try to save their Republic, which is already discredited.

Four days later I had to say that the streets were full of beggars, and that there was dreadful misery in the poor quarters of the town. We heard nothing now of peace, and were led to expect that a great battle was imminent.

Meanwhile Paris was dull to the point of distraction—no carriages moving about, shops shut, and at night total darkness. I wrote at the time: 'I really think the Prussians are carrying on the war to no purpose. If they take Paris they will not get better terms; and soon France will have no money to give them.'

In a letter to my daughter, dated November 22, I expressed my fear that my correspondence was falling into the hands of the Prussians, since I had not heard for weeks from any of my family. I added:—

Many telegrams have been received here by pigeon from Tours, but not one for me.

We still get enough food, but no variety. There is a small quantity of fresh meat, beef and mutton, enough for fifteen days more; then horse, mule, donkey, and finally salt meat. I believe that Paris can resist for two months, but, as the provinces do not come, there is no use in it. There are no riots now, but all day and night we hear drums and cannon. There is only one subject of conversation, the war, varied sometimes by the question of food, which engrosses some of our friends' attention.

December opened darkly indeed—every day that passed seemed to heighten the gloom.

Paris, 1st December, 1870.

We have had dreadful anxieties here, war and bloodshed. I hope we shall escape famine—

we have enough food for six weeks, but the misery is frightful. I myself get enough to eat. I killed a cow, and am living upon her (salted). I have another, but am threatened every day to have her seized. I have two horses here, and I fear they will be taken for food. My health is good, and so is Aston's. My spirits sometimes depressed, but I won't 'let my pecker go down.' I am glad I stayed, as it has kept up the courage of my people. We have become quite accustomed to cannon-roaring; indeed the dead and wounded do not now make the effect upon me they did. There was a tremendous fight yesterday. The din shook the whole town. The French troops fought well, and gained a position. The entry of the wounded all night was awful. All is relatively quiet to-day, but we hear that there is to be a battle to-night.'

No fresh meat was now to be had, except horse-flesh. There was great distress, and children began to die for want of proper nourishment.

Paris, 3rd December, 1870.

The effort to break the blockade from without has been immense since the beginning of the week, and with some success. There was a battle at Champigny which lasted from four in the morning until seven at night on Wednesday, and another yesterday from eight until half-past five. The French fought well, and on Wednesday increased the circle which surrounds us. Yesterday, at first the Prussians had the best of it, but in the afternoon they were driven back, and the French gained ground again. The loss on this side has been considerable, estimated

at 6,000 killed and wounded. I believe the Prussians lost quite as many. It is very sad to see all this. In the morning we hear the roar of cannon, in the evening we see the ambulance waggons bringing in the wounded. There is always great anxiety in the clubs, for most of the members have relatives, and all, friends engaged. Poor Nevertée fell on Wednesday, and yesterday, Mons. de Grancey was killed at the head of his regiment. This is all very awful, and the King of Prussia is accountable for these murders; for, although the French were wrong at the beginning, he is now continuing the war wickedly and uselessly. I suppose kings are not made like other people, or he cannot sleep quietly. I need not say that I am heartily disgusted with 'the conquerors' and their ambition. Time hangs heavy, but there is an end to all. We have now been shut eleven weeks, and can stand a few more.

Letters were few and far between, and though I despatched notes to my wife constantly by balloon, many of them fell into the hands of the enemy. The suspense was at times terrible, and the Englishman's right to grumble was duly exercised.

Paris, 10th December, 1870.

I wrote to you on the 24th and 27th of November, and the 1st and 8th of December, by balloon; I told you in those letters that I had received letters from Fanny from Lisbon, dated 7th of November, and from Clementine, dated London, 13th of November. I have not received

any news of any of you of a later date, except from Marguerite, dated 18th of November, and some old letters by Rouen from you and her, dated 17th of October. I have no doubt you have tried all ways of sending me letters. It appears to me that the difficulty increases daily, for we have had no 'Times' since the 18th of November. I am very well, and so is Aston. I cannot give you any news of what is going on here, as my letters must be read. I suppose that neither Prussians nor French can object to my saying that I pray Heaven that this wicked war may be soon over. Claremont and Hore take this letter. I am sorry they are going. I might have done so also, but I should, I feel, be sacrificing my duty if I did. We may have some anxious days to pass, and my presence here may be more useful than ever.

On the day the above letter was written I received an official letter from Colonel Claremont placing me in charge of the British Embassy. It ran as follows :—

Ambassade d'Angleterre.
Paris, le 10 Décembre, 1870.

Je déclare par la présente que Monsieur Edward Blount, sujet Anglais, est chargé, en l'absence des Représentants officiels du Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique, de veiller officieusement à la conservation des propriétés de l'ambassade, aux objets et archives qui y sont renfermés, et de requérir au besoin la protection des autorités Françaises.

Monsieur Blount veut bien en même temps

rendre à ses nationaux, en tant qu'il le pourra, les services qu'ils seront dans le cas de réclamer.

(Signed) W. CLAREMONT (Colonel),
Attaché Militaire.

The authorities now began to look sharply after all the live-stock in the city. My horses were requisitioned, and I failed to get an exemption except for one of them. Envious eyes were also cast at the remaining cow.

Paris, 22nd December, 1870.

You know that all the Embassy is now gone, and I have all the English miseries on my back. There has been an order to send our horses to the abattoirs—two of the three I have. I refused, and have written to Jules Favre and the Minister of Commerce. The latter says that I must obey, but I will not. They are also teasing me about my cow, and I have all the English applying to me on the same matter, also. In some quarters the Garde Nationale have seized apartments, etc., etc. In fine, I am surrounded by miseries of every sort. I am quite well, and Aston neither better nor worse. His dysentery teases him, and the doctor says that he wants change of air and diet. Both are impossible. In the meantime he does his duty on the fields of battle, and was out from six yesterday morning until four in the evening. He is gone again to-day. I saw the affair yesterday from a distance. From what I can hear there is no progress made by the French, but there is fighting again to-day. We know nothing of what is going on in the provinces. With regard to provisions, the information we get is still very

vague. Some say that there is sufficient still for eight weeks, others for six: I believe the latter to be right. I am heartily sick of it. This total want of news of any one is unbearable, and the constant anxiety and the one only thought and conversation is wearying in the extreme.

The cold was intense during the next few days; hunger and misery did their cruel work. Horses were rapidly disappearing from the streets; a few poultry remained, but the prices demanded for them were fabulous, and upwards of four hundred thousand persons were in receipt of relief.

Christmas day broke gloomily. It was said at the time that cold, hunger, agony, grief, and despair sat enthroned in Paris. Christmas day proved the coldest that had yet been experienced, and, to make matters worse, all the fire-wood was that morning requisitioned by the authorities. Here is the letter I wrote to my wife on that most dreary anniversary of the great festival. I will give it exactly as it was written:—

Paris, 25th of December, 1870.

My dearest Gertrude,—The last letters I wrote to you were on the 8th, 10th, 16th, 19th, and 22nd of December. I wish you, Marie, and all your circle a happy Christmas. I cannot say much for my Christmas, for I feel very lonely

and at times discouraged, but I do not allow myself to despond. We had no midnight mass, as there is no more gas lit after twelve. I thought of you all, and am sure you all prayed for me. I saw Abbé Miquel to-day. You know he is first Vicaire of St. Philippe.

The weather is dreadfully cold, and the suffering in consequence indescribable. No coal is to be had, and scarcely any wood. There is luckily a stock of both in the Rue de Courcelles, and I shall be able to let Madame de Vatry have some if I cannot get it anywhere else for her. I have great trouble about my horses. Jules Favre says I have no privilege, but adds that he has no doubt that the Minister of Commerce will do something for me. All I want is to save Mouse, and still hope to do so. I have not much more food for the horses or cow, and must get rid of the latter if I can find none immediately. I have bottled some milk for my tea, but I shall have no more butter. Do not be alarmed about me, for I have still salt meat, two hams, biscuit, and confiture. We also get well fed at the club at dinner, but prices are exorbitant. I have no complaints in the Rue de Courcelles, and therefore suppose they have enough. I heard from W. Mostyn on the 23rd, letter dated 2nd of December. He says that you are all well, but his account of Daisy is middling. I have received no telegrams, although many thousands have arrived. There has not been much fighting since my letter on the 22nd, but the sufferings of the troops from cold are awful. I suppose we shall have another awful carnage in a few days. All the news we know is gathered from papers found on Prussian dead or prisoners.

It appears to me that the French have inflicted severe checks so far on the Prussians, but that we cannot hope to be relieved by a French army. I fear we cannot force in this link of the chain that surrounds us. Paris can, I think, find provisions for another month at least. We hear that the King of Prussia is crowned Emperor of Germany. His crown is at any rate steeped in blood, and such crowns do not fit comfortably. Charles Dillon is well. I never heard of Hortense Thayer, but will go and see her in a day or two. Aston says he is better—at any rate he is always about and on horseback. Perhaps all the horses have been requisitioned. Good bye, best love to all.

Most affectionately yours,

E. Blount.

CHAPTER X

CONSUL IN PARIS DURING THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE SIEGE

Just after Christmas the pigeon post began to fail, and for more than a fortnight Paris was without news of the outer world. I wrote to my wife on January 1st, 1871, to wish her a happy New Year, and two or three sentences from the letter may be cited :—

My cow is killed, and poor Pauline broken-hearted. I still get salt cow for breakfast, bread and confiture, and I have some bottled milk. I have given Aston some cow, for he can no longer find food at the restaurants, and prices are frightful. A ham costs 250 francs, a rabbit 35 to 40 francs, camel 14 francs and elephant 25 francs a pound. Nevertheless people can live three or four weeks more. We do not get as much as we want at dinner, which is now 50 francs per head (relatively cheap), but I think a little starvation does no harm. Aston seems now better. I have had the 'grippe,' but am much better to-day. I still have my big horse and Mouse, but I defend them from day to day. There has been no fighting for the last few days

on this side, but the Prussians night and day bombard the forts. The absence of news causes all sorts of reports—change of Ministry in England. I do not believe a word of it—also that Chanzy has beaten Frederick Charles. I hope that this is true. I have much to do with the English, since all the Embassy have gone.

It was now more than a month since I had had any news of my family, and as one of my daughters was very ill my anxiety was naturally great. I wrote on January 5, telling of the despatch of my previous letter, and giving further particulars about the state of affairs in the beleaguered city.

It is now more than a month since I heard about you all—it makes me anxious, and particularly about poor Daisy. Letters have arrived here from Brussels, dated December 23, but they give no news about you; also many people have had copies sent to them of advertisements in the 'Times,' but I have had none. I suspect that this system will be no longer of any use, as the Prussians probably know of it and will stop it for the future. I am, as you may imagine, heartily sick of the life I lead, always alone, and I have had an attack of 'grippe,' which has not added to the pleasures of existence. As far as I am concerned I get enough to eat. Thank Heaven I am not 'difficile,' and do not require much, but the small portions served out at the club at 10 francs a head make some of our friends rather less 'Chauvin' than they were—

even the Colonel asks for more. Prices of provisions are enormous, a ham 250 francs, a rabbit 35 francs, a goose 100 francs, a chicken 40 francs, potatoes 3 sous, elephant 14 francs per pound, and camel the same price. No coal is to be had at any price. I gave 250 kilos to Abbé Miquel, and 500 kilos to Madame de Vatry, and exchanged 1,200 kilos for 30 bundles of hay. I have been able to save my mare Mouse up to the present moment, but sadly fear that she will be seized. My last cow is gone, and poor Pauline and Clementine look very sad indeed. No one can form an opinion of how long Paris can hold out. I believe that there are provisions for a month, and perhaps as many days more as would be required to bring them in. There has been a frightful cannonading all day to-day, and some projectiles have fallen in the Cemetery of Mont Parnasse. I do not as yet know what damage they have done, but I suspect very little. I am going, if I can, to send my clerk, Mons. Carnaud, by balloon to London. If he goes he will write to Henri to join him in London.

M. Carnaud duly got away. His mission was to buy provisions and be ready to bring them into Paris the moment the siege was raised. I wrote telling my wife of his departure and giving her his address in London, which was the Cannon Street Hotel.

I added, under date of January 12, 1871 :—

I have had no further news of you since

W. Mostyn's letter of 2nd December. 15,000 telegraphic despatches have arrived from Bordeaux, 5,000 have been distributed, and not one for me. Send a short one to me. There are all sorts of reports about the time for which there is food. I have a difficulty in believing that there is more than for three weeks or a month, but some members of the Government declare that we can hold out all February. If so, I think the Prussians will have enough of it, for the armies of the provinces seem to be giving them much trouble. They have 'shotted' us frightfully for some days. Many fell in Paris, and one in the Rue du Bac, also in the Duchesse de Galliera's garden. The 'serres' of the Jardin des Plantes are destroyed, St. Sulpice damaged, and the Pitié Hospital devastated. The Pantheon also has received a good many shells. Auteuil, Passy, and Grenelle have suffered considerably. A good many deaths have been the consequence, and five little girls in one school were killed with one shot. There is now an emigration towards the middle of Paris. I fear the Rue de Courcelles runs some risk, but Madame Gomot, etc., live in the 'sous-sol.' The notice of the bombardment arrived five days after it began, that is only the day before yesterday, and I suppose we shall have an awful shower of iron to-night. The noise is awful, a loud report, then a whistle and a crash. It has had no effect on the people, except to make them more determined than ever. Odo Russell has sent me, by order of Lord Granville, instructions to pay to the British Charitable Fund 1,500*l.* for the English poor in Paris.

Five days later I wrote :—

I have nothing new to say, as the position is the same as it was, except that we are drawing nearer to the end of our provisions. It is impossible to know the truth on this matter—indeed, I believe that nobody does know the reality. We are now allowed 400 grammes of heavy black bread per head, composed of a small quantity of wheat flour, and the rest oatmeal and rice. As all the horses are disappearing, being eaten, oats are to be had. Indeed, there are so many contrivances to eke out existence, that I think we may find sufficient to keep body and soul together for three weeks more—indeed, if there is a chance of an army coming to our succour, the hope might make us stand our miseries longer. Personally, I am pretty well off. I still have one horse and some cow, biscuits, and confiture, but the misery around me is frightful. I have no official capacity, and am often placed in a false position. All the other Powers have signed a protest against the bombardment, and the absence of England has produced a painful effect. The 'Electeur Libre' says that I did not protest because I had done so previously by separate communication to Lord Granville. This is naturally untrue, but I dare not rectify it. I fear that my position may become ridiculous, and really this is too bad. We are still shelled awfully. The noise is tremendous, and even in the Rue de la Paix I cannot sleep. Nothing has fallen nearer to it than the Invalides. At first I did not believe that the Prussians picked out particular buildings, churches, hospitals, etc., but as they have thrown their missiles into the

Salpêtrière, it appears to me that they must have meant it. A great many women and children have been killed, and all this barbarity is useless, as Paris will not yield a day sooner for it. I think the German papers show as much irritation, but they must be alarmed. In fine, it is an unmitigated horror, and I see no solution. I still have my horses, but expect every day to have to give them up. I have sold all the wood we had, beyond what was necessary, as I feared a seizure.'

My next letter was written on the hundred and twenty-seventh day of the siege, the nineteenth of the bombardment, Monday, January 23rd, 1871.

On the previous Saturday night the mob attacked the Prison of Mazas, and succeeded in liberating Flourens, Pyat, and other Revolutionists. The following morning they seized the Mairie of the Twentieth Arrondissement, but were repulsed by the National Guard. A fierce crowd gathered round the Hôtel de Ville in the afternoon, exclaiming: 'Donnez-nous du pain.' They looted the neighbouring houses and finally attacked the Hôtel de Ville itself, but the Garde Mobile came to the rescue and fired on the mob, killing five and wounding eighteen, and then the people melted away like snow.

Next day, January 22nd, General Trochu

resigned his military command in consequence of the clamour against what the mob regarded as a too cautious defence of Paris, and the post was abolished. I called upon him on the evening of the same day at the État Major in the Place Vendôme, where I had often seen him surrounded by a brilliant staff. Now, alas! I found him abandoned—in fact left to face the crisis, with Madame Trochu and one faithful member of his staff, M. de Montebello. The General was calm, and frankly recognised the situation. He asked me whether I had ever thought it possible, with the kind of army left in Paris, demoralised, half-starved, and with nothing in abundance, except drink, to make an effectual stand against the splendid and highly disciplined troops of the invaders. I was compelled to admit the truth of such a view; for though the French soldiers, even when driven to bay, showed no lack of valour, their condition in Paris at that time was, in other respects, deplorable.

I wrote next day as follows:—

We had a bad riot here yesterday. The Belleville mob attacked the Hôtel de Ville, but were repulsed, though a good many lives were lost. It is very dreadful, and I pray Heaven that it may be soon over, and I think it will. All is quiet to-day. We are only allowed a small

quantity of bread, and it is hard, heavy, and black. I still have my horses, but have had a hard fight to preserve them. The bombardment continues day and night. The Prussians send us a great many murderous shells. St. Denis is completely destroyed, and the loss of life on the 'rive gauche' is considerable. It is a useless piece of barbarity, for Paris will not yield a day sooner for it. We have provisions for fifteen days more. You know I always said there was food until the middle of January. The last battle under the walls of Paris has caused great desolation. We must trust in Providence and hope for the best.

We can last until the 5th of February, but there will be nothing left, and the railways cannot be opened for from five to eight days. We may have therefore a frightful epoch to pass. I have written strongly to Lord Lyons on the subject, and addressed my letter to the Foreign Office, as I do not know where he is. I am terribly tormented by the English. They are frightened out of their wits, have no money, and are watched as spies. My whole day is occupied with them. The Ministers treat me as if I had official powers, but I have none. Odo Russell writes to me from Versailles. I suppose you cannot write to that place? His address is 6, Place Hoche. I wrote to Lord Granville to ask him to give me news of you, and so perhaps you will hear from him. I do all I can to replace the Embassy. It will soon be all over now, for we are disheartened at the news from the provinces.

I have reached a point in my narrative when it becomes necessary to explain the circum-

stances which led to my appointment, by despatch, dated January 24, 1871, as Her Majesty's Consul in Paris during the siege. Lord Lyons, with several other Ambassadors, on November 17 quitted Paris, shortly after the siege began, but the American Minister, and all the other members of the Diplomatic Corps, to the number of seventeen, stuck to their posts in the beleaguered city. The British Government sanctioned the departure of the Ambassador, though the manner of Lord Lyons's withdrawal did not escape criticism in the House of Commons. Sir Robert Peel denounced the Ambassador's departure as an 'ungenerous and unmanly flight.' He pointed out the position in which nearly two thousand English subjects were placed by what he regarded as a dereliction of duty, and he added that he could not help looking upon his conduct as 'most unbecoming.' Lord Malmesbury, speaking in the House of Lords on the same subject, said: 'Thank God the English were not wholly deserted—they were taken care of by three men whose names will be considered noble as long as the history of the siege is recorded, Mr. Wallace, Dr. Herbert (Lord Carnarvon's brother), and Mr. Blount—and by their means hundreds were saved from misery and death.'

I must add that Mr. Gladstone in the Commons, and Lord Granville in the Lords, deprecated such attacks, and defended Lord Lyons's departure. Part of Mr. Gladstone's speech in the House of Commons, February 17, may be quoted:—

If the flight of Lord Lyons is to be censured, it was not 'ungenerous or unmanly,' for he acted under the direct injunctions of the Government at home, and Lord Lyons can in no sense be held responsible for it. I wish to know what would have been our wisdom and prudence if at that time, when the iron circle was about to close round Paris, we had instructed Lord Lyons to remain there, and had made ourselves dependent for our communications with our principal and most trusted agent in France upon the chances of passing through the Prussian lines, and of the replies also passing through those lines, so that three, five, ten, or more days would have been occupied in the passage of communications. My right hon. friend, Sir Robert Peel, seems to think that the primary duty of an Ambassador in Paris is to take care of the British subjects in Paris; but there cannot be a greater mistake—his primary duty is to take care of the interests of his country; it is a collateral duty to do all that he can for those English people who may have occasion to reside in Paris, but there was no occasion for any to reside in Paris who could get out of it.

Lord Granville in the House of Lords, on

February 21, spoke to the same effect, but added that the Government had ascertained, after Colonel Claremont had left Paris, that a great many English men and women were shut up in the French capital, and were suffering terrible privations in consequence of the siege. He added that the British Government had acknowledged the aid which was given at such a crisis by Messrs. Wallace, Herbert, and Blount to their distressed fellow-countrymen, and that about 42,000*l.* had been expended in this direction.

At the same time, the fact remains that, through the failure of the British Government to provide for the presence of an authorised representative in Paris, the British residents were placed during the siege in a most perilous position. Lord Lyons admitted that it was by his instructions that Mr. Wodehouse, whom he had left in temporary charge of the Embassy, left the city the moment it was threatened with bombardment, or, in other words, exactly when the presence of some one in authority was most needed. Lord Lyons left on September 16 for Tours, where a section of the Provisional Government was sitting. England, acting in concert with other Powers, had already

recognised it as the *de facto* Government of France. Lord Lyons declared that he regarded it as his duty at the moment to act with his principal colleagues. He was anxious, moreover, to be in a position to confer immediately with the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, Jules Favre, as well as to be able to communicate at once, without the risk of his despatches being intercepted, with his own Government. When the Provisional Government left Tours and made Bordeaux its headquarters, Lord Lyons went also, as did his colleagues.

Meanwhile, as the enemy had invested Paris, other decisions were taken by the Foreign Office, with the result that, at about the middle of the siege, the whole of the staff followed their chief. This diplomatic retreat, to make matters worse, was accompanied by the hurried departure of Her Majesty's Consul and the whole of his staff, so that the English in Paris were left at a supreme crisis without any official representative, either in politics or commerce, of Her Majesty's Government. The departure of the staff of the Embassy, and particularly that of Colonel Claremont, Military Attaché, was much criticised, but I can only mention the fact, and it is not my province to comment on the matter.

But, as the situation became more critical, it became necessary that some one should act decisively in the interests of Her Majesty's subjects in Paris, and the task of looking after our distressed fellow-countrymen devolved upon me.

Colonel Claremont, before quitting Paris, requested, on his own responsibility, General Trochu to accept me for this post of difficulty, and for several weeks before a balloon despatch arrived in Paris, addressed to M. Jules Favre, in which I was formally appointed British Consul, I had virtually undertaken the duties of that position. The first formal intimation I received of an official appointment was contained in the following note from Lord Lyons, sent by pigeon on January 26 :—

M. Edward Blount, 3 Rue de la Paix.

'Vous êtes autorisé dès à présent à entrer en fonctions et à sauvegarder les intérêts de nos nationaux. La Délégation à Bordeaux annonce votre nomination au Gouvernement à Paris.'

LYONS.

A day or two later the confirmation of this appointment reached me in a despatch from Lord Granville :

Foreign Office, January 24, 1871.

'Sir,—I have to thank you on behalf of Her Majesty's Government for the kind attention

which you are showing to the interests of British subjects shut up in Paris, and I have thought it might aid you in doing so if you were provided with some official authority.

I accordingly enclose to you a Commission under Her Majesty's Sign Manual appointing you to be her Consul in Paris. I had desired Mr. Odo Russell to ascertain from you whether it would be agreeable to you to receive such authority; but as the communications between England and Versailles are slow, and as the opportunities which Mr. Russell may have of communicating with you are probably few and uncertain, I have thought it best at once to send this letter and the enclosed Commission to him, to be sent to you as soon as possible, anticipating thus the expression of your willingness to receive and act under it.

I should be much obliged to you if you would express to Mr. Herbert, Mr. Wallace, and the Rev. Clarke Smyth the thanks of Her Majesty's Government for their kindness towards British subjects, explaining that I do not write to them myself on account of the difficulty of passing letters into Paris.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient and humble servant,
GRANVILLE.

The following official communication, issued according to the usual form on such occasions, from the Government of National Defence, speaks for itself:—

Le Gouvernement de la Défense Nationale,

ayant vu et examiné la Commission en date du 23 janvier 1871, par laquelle Sa Majesté britannique a nommé Edward Blount, Esquire, Consul du Royaume Uni à Paris, et voulant traiter favorablement M. Ed. Blount, lui a accordé l'autorisation d'exercer les fonctions qui lui sont conférées dans l'intérêt des gens de mer et marchands britanniques et de jouir de tous les privilèges, franchises et prééminences attachés à son emploi, ordonne à toutes les autorités administratives et judiciaires de le reconnaître en la qualité de Consul, afin qu'il puisse remplir librement lesdites fonctions consulaires, sous la réserve toutefois, que s'il se livrait à des actes pour lesquelles il entrât personnellement dans des engagements, il pourrait être poursuivi, ainsi qu'il est d'usage, sans être admis à opposer aucun privilège. Enjoint auxdites autorités de tenir la main à l'exécution de la présente autorisation, qu'elles feront enregistrer partout où besoin sera.

Fait à Paris, février 1871.

(Signé) Général Trochu, Ernest Picard, Jules Ferry, Emm. Arago, Jules Favre, Garnier Pagès, Eugène Pelletan.

Meanwhile Lord Lyons contrived to send me another letter from Bordeaux, in which satisfaction was expressed at my appointment:—

Bordeaux, January 26, 1871.

My dear Mr. Blount,—I cannot tell you what a relief it is to me that you should have official authority to take care of our countrymen in Paris in

these terrible times. I am sure you will not grudge the labour which it will add to your many good works. I send you in an official shape a list of applications. You will see at a glance what, if anything, can be done now in the several cases. I have included amongst the names my niece, Lady Minna Howard, at the Carmelite Convent, No. 25, Rue d'Enfer, though I am sure it is not necessary for me to recommend her and her sister nuns to your care.

Yours very sincerely,

LYONS.

Mr. Wallace, Dr. Herbert, and myself distributed from first to last some forty thousand pounds in relief. Both these gentlemen were indefatigable all through the siege in their efforts to relieve distress. I myself spent a large sum out of my own purse, for it was impossible to witness such suffering without taking instant steps to alleviate it. I do not wish to magnify my own services, for I only tried to do my duty, but I am glad to think that in the presence of starvation I never counted the cost. It is scarcely necessary to add that I refused to receive any payment for my services, but the Government repaid me 1,000*l.* which I had advanced by their orders.

Tidings of the Convention of the 28th of January, providing for the armistice, were suddenly

received, and as Mr. Washbourne put it: 'Those who had fought least made the greatest noise and were more furious than any one else to continue the war *à outrance*.' Gambetta, who was at Tours on the last day of January, issued a defiant proclamation which did much to complicate the situation. Rhetoric notwithstanding, Paris was vanquished, and more by hunger than by the sword.

In a letter which I find I wrote to my wife at the moment, and dated January 31, 1871, occur these words:—

You will have heard of all that has taken place here. We have what is called armistice, but what is in reality a capitulation. The misery is appalling. We hope for provisions at the end of the week, but the railways are in an awful state. There is no way of getting to Boulogne or Calais. I am overloaded with work. Her Majesty has named me her Consul, and the Ministers have written me flattering letters. I had to break open the offices at the Embassy to get the papers to give passports. Thank Heaven the bombardment is over, and all this carnage. I bought some beef to-day at six francs a pound. I bought horse-flesh, which I distributed amongst my own clerks and others to save them from starvation. Peace must be made, for we cannot believe that all these horrors are to begin again.

Meanwhile the King of Prussia had been solemnly proclaimed Emperor of Germany in the Galerie des Glaces, at Versailles, on January 18, 1871, the anniversary of the day on which Frederick, first King of Prussia, had crowned himself at Königsberg in 1701. Six days later Paris was driven to bay, not merely by bombardment but by lack of bread. On January 24, the Crown Prince wrote that the greatest excitement prevailed in Versailles, and added :—

At the conference in His Majesty's quarters, attended by Moltke, Roon, and myself, Bismarck announced that Favre was prepared to conclude an armistice, surrender the forts, and lay down his weapons. He confesses that there is famine in Paris, and that 'une sédition a éclaté.' He was afraid to return, and at supper with Bismarck displayed the appetite of a wolf.

Two days later MM. Thiers, Favre, and Picard were forced to agree to the cession of Alsace, including Strasburg, part of Lorraine with Metz, and a war indemnity of five milliards of francs (200,000,000*l.*) It was on such terms that the preliminaries of peace were signed at Versailles on Sunday, February 26.

As soon as Bismarck and Jules Favre signed the armistice, the practical question that came up, in Paris at least, was the bringing in of pro-

visions for the starving populace with the smallest possible delay. Railway communications were broken, and the Seine was impassable because of the destruction of all the bridges, and the craft that had been sunk in it during the siege. February opened dismally. The soldiers were lounging about the streets, famished, unarmed, and disheartened, and, as if to make matters worse, it was discovered that a blunder had been made in the official statistics respecting the stock of provisions still on hand, which had already come perilously near to the vanishing point.

The elections for the new National Assembly were to take place on February 8, and the Deputies were to meet at Bordeaux in the following week, so as to be able to speak for France decisively before the armistice expired.

The want of fuel was now quite as great as the lack of food. Meanwhile everything was in suspense pending the result of the elections, and my position, I need scarcely say, was sufficiently arduous, as the following letter to my wife, dated February 6, 1871, reveals :—

I will send Aston to see you as soon as the road to Nantes is open. I believe that it is possible to get a train through, but the authority to do so has not yet arrived. As for myself, I must stay here. I have now more than I can

get through. The Queen has named me her Consul here, and I am, during the absence of the Embassy, to attend to all the diplomatic business and see Jules Favre frequently and the other Ministers. I have to issue and sign all the passports, give advice and assistance to all my countrymen, and besides this, to attend to my own business. I have no attaché or any one to help me, and as I must write to Lord Granville or Odo Russell at Versailles every day, I am up till three in the morning. Aston goes on horseback for me to Versailles two or three times a week, and will take this letter. I was there last week, and saw Odo Russell. The great difficulty I have is to get answers to anything from the Ministers here. They are inexperienced and overloaded in their business. I can assure you that I should like to see you, if only for twenty-four hours, but it is impossible. I cannot leave, and you must not come here. All the doctors say that it is bad to come into Paris; the air is dangerous to those who have not got accustomed to it. Our food is better, we get some flour-bread, and Aston has brought us all fresh meat from Versailles. The goods trains are arriving fast, and I have no doubt that we shall have enough. The English have sent lots of money and provisions. I saved Mouse and my other horse by one subterfuge or the other, and for the last few days could claim privilege. The Commission of Consul was sent me before I accepted, it was so urgent to have some one here. I replied that I would hold during 'Her Majesty's pleasure.' It is impossible I can do the work long, and when Lord Lyons comes back I shall be relieved of the labour.

The air was filled with rumours, and nobody within Paris knew what would happen from hour to hour. The German troops were now in possession of the forts, and, with the exception of twelve thousand men, who were left under arms to preserve order, the regulars and mobiles alike, who had defended Paris, were prisoners of war. The armistice had been signed on January 28, and was to expire on February 19, so that there were only five days for the Assembly, which was to meet at Bordeaux on the 12th, to arrive at a decision. In a letter written to my wife on February 9, I find that I said :—

As for myself, I am tired and sick of Paris, but there is not the slightest chance of my getting away until I am relieved by some of the Embassy, for I have all on my back, passports, certificates, marriages, advice, etc. In fine, it must be done, therefore there is no use grumbling. I have had a very kind letter from Lord Lyons. You know how good he is, and it was his kindness of heart which allowed him to let all the Embassy leave. Let us all hope that we shall meet before long. As for myself, I hope to get away in ten days, but I have now to organise the distribution of one thousand four hundred tons of provisions sent by the English Government, and I hope the Caisse d'Epargne may add to it.

Mr. Odo Russell, afterwards Lord Ampthill,

had been despatched by the English Government on a special mission to the headquarters of the German army at Versailles, and, during those anxious days of the armistice, I was often in communication with him.

Almost the first person to enter Paris was Mr. Lawrence Oliphant, who came with a brief note from Odo Russell to the following effect: 'Let me introduce Mr. Oliphant to you. His name is too well known to require a biography.' I was in constant communication with Odo Russell about the question of relief of distress, and that he acted energetically in the matter the following notes will show:—

Versailles, February 1st, 1871.

Lord Granville telegraphs to-day: 'Inform Mr. Blount that a gentleman named Moore is proceeding to-night to Dieppe, on his way to Paris, on behalf of the Lord Mayor, in charge of provisions, and request him to take any steps in his power to prevent any obstacles being thrown in the way of his safe passage into Paris. I will inform the German authorities in like manner, but as far as I know this matter does not concern them, but the French.'

Odo Russell.

6, Place Hoche, Versailles, February 2nd, 1871.

Lord Granville telegraphs to-day: 'Inform M. Jules Favre and headquarters at Versailles that on their joint request by telegraph or other-

wise our stores and people are at their service if we can be of any use, subject to no condition except that whatever we do must be done with the cognisance and approval of a French and a German agent.—GRANVILLE.' Will you give publicity to this and communicate it to M. Favre in Paris, in the name of H.M. Government, while I do the same here at Versailles?

ODO RUSSELL.

As soon as the armistice was proclaimed, the London Relief Committee, which had been nobly working all through the siege, and was only waiting its opportunity, despatched its first consignment of food and fuel to Paris by way of Folkestone and Dieppe, as a gift. In the early days of February nearly ten thousand tons of flour, four hundred and fifty tons of rice, nine hundred tons of biscuits, three hundred and sixty tons of fish, and nearly four thousand tons of fuel, with about seven thousand head of live stock, were brought to the relief of Paris.

When Mr. Moore, who was sent by the Lord Mayor in charge of the stores, informed me that they had arrived, I hastened to present him to the proper authorities. The goods were received with thanks, but when a certain quantity of pheasants and other luxuries were seen by the Delegates of the Provisional Government, they

exclaimed: 'Ces choses-là sont pour l'aristocratie et non pour le peuple. Il ne serait pas prudent de les distribuer,' and, if I remember right, the pheasants and luxuries were sent back to England.

It was some time before postal communications were re-opened between Paris and London. The accompanying letters enable the reader to realise something of the nature of the difficulties which prevailed in the transmission of correspondence at the close of the siege. M. Desenne, Chef de Bureau for the Section of Correspondence, wrote to me on February 2, 1871:—

Sir,—You took the trouble to go to the Post Office (Administration des Postes) to inquire whether the General Post Office in London had been informed of the arrangements said to have been made relative to letters from Great Britain for Paris, and of the postage which should be charged for these letters. I regret to be unable to supply you with any indication on this subject. As soon as the arrangements in question shall have been completed with the agents of the North German Confederation postal service, I shall be happy to comply with your request and to make known to you the conditions to be fulfilled for the interchange of correspondence between Paris and London during the duration of the armistice.

Further, the same writer, under date of February 4, 1871, addressed the following letter to the Acting British Consul in Paris :—

Sir,—In compliance with the request which you expressed to me to make known as soon as possible the arrangements come to with regard to letters from England to the destination of Paris during the armistice, I hasten to inform you that the German authorities have not consented to let the Paris Office continue to correspond with the offices of foreign countries. Letters from Paris for Great Britain and *vice versa* shall be exchanged between the General Post Office in London and the Postal Offices of the North German Confederation, according to the rules laid down for letters despatched from the United Kingdom to Germany and *vice versa*. Thus, a letter from Paris for London will require to be franked as far as Versailles, but could not be stamped for London except by an intermediary residing at Versailles. In the contrary direction, a letter from London for Paris could only be posted as far as Versailles. A letter weighing ten grammes franked from Paris for London will be subjected to the payment by the sender of a tax of twenty centimes, and by the recipient of a tax of sixpence (article six of the Convention of April 25, 1870, between England and North Germany) viz., sender twenty centimes, receiver sixty-two and a half centimes, total eighty-two and a half centimes. A letter of the same weight, prepaid from London to Paris, would cost the sender for the Anglo-German postage, threepence, or thirty-one and

a quarter centimes, and to the receiver twenty centimes, total fifty one and a quarter centimes. Legally the tax incumbent on the receiver ought to be thirty centimes, but bearing in mind the impossibility of the British Post Office franking letters for Paris beyond Versailles, the French Post Office has decided not to charge for letters prepaid to Versailles more than the cost of postage from Versailles to Paris. In these conditions it does not appear incumbent on the French administration to write to the General Post Office, according to the request of Mr. Odo Russell. It is for the German administration, as medium between Paris and foreign parts, to notify to the neutrals interested therein the conditions of transmission by its intermediary of letters which are exchanged in Paris. You will no doubt deem it proper to inform Mr. Odo Russell of the preceding explanations, which I beg of you to consider confidential.

DESENNE.

On February 12, the Assembly met at Bordeaux, and M. Thiers was appointed Chief of the Executive Power and President of the Council of Ministers. M. Thiers gave M. Dufaure the portfolio of the Ministry of Justice, confirmed Jules Favre as Minister of Foreign Affairs, selected Ernest Picard as Minister of the Interior, Jules Simon as Minister of Public Instruction, and Admiral Pothuau as Minister of Marine. Fifteen Commissioners were elected to assist M. Thiers's Government in the peace negotia-

tions at Versailles, and then the Assembly adjourned until progress could be reported.

It was difficult for me to keep pace with the demands of one kind or another, and especially for assistance, advice, and safe conduct, which now poured in upon me from all quarters.

In a letter written to my wife I say:—

Paris, 18th February.

A messenger is going at eleven with despatches for Lord Granville from me, and I have just one moment to write to you. I am overwhelmed with business. The letters which now arrive are most numerous, but as Wodehouse has come back, and as West is coming to-morrow, I shall be relieved of some part of what I have to do. We do not know whether any of the letters we write are received. We have now to organise the distribution of fourteen hundred tons of provisions sent by the English Government.

My next letter, written immediately afterwards, shows that order was gradually being evolved out of chaos:—

I am getting a little clear of the confusion attendant upon the opening of Paris, and as West and Wodehouse are here, I shall be able to get away soon. I cannot find out as yet how to get to Amiens. The Western Railway goes to Le Mans; to-morrow I will find out whether it is possible to go to Amiens by Redon. The English Cabinet messenger who came from

Bordeaux to-day was three days on the road. I do not know what day I can start, but certainly not before Wednesday. I must be in London as soon as possible, therefore I will stay two days with you, and then go to London the nearest way possible. I must stay in England six days, of which two must be spent in seeing my property in Worcestershire, of which I know nothing. Everything is quiet here. I suppose peace will soon be concluded.

The exodus from Paris of English people was great and constant during the armistice, and, apart from the work of relief, my hands were full with the task of preparing passports, as the following letter from Lord Enfield will show:—

Foreign Office, February 18th, 1871.

Sir,—I am directed by Earl Granville to acknowledge the receipt of a letter from you on the 6th inst., containing information in regard to the opening of railway communication with Paris, and I am to express to you His Lordship's thanks for the information contained in it; and also his approval of the steps taken by you in supplying British subjects with passports to enable them to leave Paris.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient and humble servant,
ENFIELD.

I was naturally anxious, now that the crisis was over, to attend to my own business, as well as to do what lay in my power to restore rail-

way communications, and therefore it was a great relief to me when another letter from the British Government gave me the opportunity for the honourable surrender of my position of Consul.

Foreign Office, February 20th, 1871.

Sir,—With reference to your letter of the 16th inst., I am directed by Earl Granville to authorise you, upon the receipt of this despatch, to transfer the charge of Her Majesty's Consulate in Paris to Mr. Willoughby. I am at the same time to renew to you Lord Granville's thanks for the able and zealous manner in which you have performed the duties appertaining to Her Majesty's Consul under trying and extraordinary circumstances.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient and humble servant,
ENFIELD.

The work of relief was now in full swing, and help had not come before it was needed. I wrote again on the 21st:—

I have made up my mind to stay here until more settled times. It is a great annoyance to me, but it would be foolish to give up so near the end. West and Wodehouse are here. The former is energetic, both do whatever is needed. I have written to Lord Granville to say that I will stay here until we have either peace or war. I believe the former is inevitable, but the Prussians will come into Paris—at least, so they say—and we shall have a 'mauvais quart d'heure,' and I must not be absent. If peace is declared, you

can come here as soon as the journey is possible for Marie. [I had not then heard of the death of my poor grandchild, who, I thought, was still living at Madeira. The anxiety about her was my keenest addition to the misery of the siege.] It is not so now, for the trains from Nantes by Redon are frequently two days and nights on the way, and so they will be as long as the Prussians have the roads.

The National Assembly, when it met at Bordeaux, confirmed the armistice, and appointed Thiers Chief of the Executive, and sent him with Jules Favre, who was still Foreign Minister, to negotiate the terms of peace at the German headquarters at Versailles. The negotiations were protracted and difficult, for the terms offered were humiliating to France, and the amount of the war indemnity was so great that Thiers exclaimed, 'Ah! c'est une spoliation véritable; c'est une indignité.'

Jules Favre made the mistake of asking that the National Guard might be allowed to retain their arms, little thinking that they would be quickly turned against law and order in Paris. He declared that Bismarck was evidently moved by the deep emotion of Thiers, when at last the preliminaries of peace were signed on the night of February 25, for the German Chancellor seized him by the hand and exclaimed, 'You

are the last man upon whom France should have laid this painful task.' The treaty was confirmed a few days later by the Government of Bordeaux, and on March 1 the German army marched into Paris.

The mortality in the capital had grown to alarming proportions in the later stages of the siege. In one week no less than four thousand persons died.

One of the stipulations of the armistice was that the German troops should not occupy Paris, but when France craved an extension of time, the Germans granted it on condition that this stipulation should be annulled. The result was that, on the 1st of March, 30,000 picked troops —the Bavarians, who had borne the brunt of the fighting, leading the way—entered the capital. The road lay through the Champs-Élysées to the Tuileries, but long before the massed regiments marched up to the Arc de Triomphe, as early in fact as nine o'clock in the morning, three Blue Hussars from Versailles rode along the splendid avenue with cool but martial bearing—the brave forerunners of the army of invasion.

The morning opened grey and desolate; the people, like the weather, were dull and—small

wonder—morose. The ends of the Rue de Rivoli, the Rue Royale, and the Rue St. Honoré were firmly barricaded. The gates of the Tuileries were closed, but the Élysée was put at the disposal of General Kamocke, who was in command of the invading host. The allegorical statue of Strasbourg, which adorns the Place de la Concorde, was draped with crape because Alsace was to be ceded.

Here is an account which I wrote on the morrow of that eventful day :—

Paris, 2nd of March, 1871.

Everything is as quiet as possible, but as long as the Prussians are here we are on a barrel of powder which the smallest spark may set fire to. I saw them come in yesterday, and they were splendid in appearance and conduct. The mob surrounded them and called them all sorts of names, but they took it all quietly and with disdain. They are lodged on the inhabitants, but I have heard no complaints of their conduct. They are not allowed to leave the Champs-Élysées or the Place de la Concorde. There was a panic this morning because some officers by permission visited the Louvre, and showed themselves from the windows, which the mob said they had not a right to do. I am astonished at the Prussians' bravery. A lieutenant of Uhlans and two men came in an hour and a half before the others, and rode through the Arc de Triomphe, down the Champs-Élysées, amidst a mob, without the slightest fear; and 3,000

were for four hours in the Champs-Élysées before the bulk of the army came in. The shops are all shut, the people all idle, and talking dreadful words: 'Nous ne sommes pas vaincus, mais vendus.' 'Paris n'est pas pris.' 'Les Prussiens ont peur,' and the like. I suppose the Prussians will move off on Saturday, although they are in a position to do as they like. As you may imagine, I am very anxious to get away, and hope to do so soon, but I cannot find out when Lord Lyons returns, and I must see him. My idea is to go to you for two days, and then return here and be off to London. It is necessary for my own interests that I should see Lord Granville. West, Wodehouse, Lascelles, and Claremont are here. The first is an energetic man, but he wants me to stay. This I will not do for many days more. I am well, but worn and tired, and anxious day and night. I sadly fear that the working classes here will have to be coerced into work.

Two days later I wrote:—

We are in a sad state here. The Prussians came here on Wednesday. They are to occupy the Champs-Élysées and the Faubourg Saint-Honoré. I saw Thiers last night, and he told me the terms of peace are two hundred million francs, of which twenty million is to be paid before the Prussians begin to move. All Alsace and a part of Lorraine is to be ceded, also Metz, but not Nancy or Belfort. Nothing could be worse, for it is ruin. Now as for my movements, the Prussians came in on Wednesday, and will stay at least two days. If, then, everything is quiet, I will run down and see you for a day if it is possible.

As soon as peace was declared, I went by special train to Versailles, at the request of the Duc de FitzJames and the Marquis de Ludre, to join Mr. Odo Russell, being accompanied by the Duc, the Marquis, and M. Marin, the present manager of the Western of France Railway. Arrived at the bridge of Asnières the Prussian guard asked for our passports. Mine was given by myself as H.B.M.'s Consul, and the three Frenchmen were made to figure as my secretaries. No objections were made. Arrived at Versailles, at the Chantiers station, we walked to the Hôtel des Réservoirs. On the road, all of a sudden, I saw the Prince de Lienhart, a Prussian officer and a fellow-member of the Jockey Club, in full uniform, in front of us. Immediately he saw us he walked up a by-street, in order not to meet us, thus relieving us of a most awkward meeting.

When we got to the Hôtel des Réservoirs we went into the restaurant. A Prussian general left his table and asked me whether one of the gentlemen with me was the Duc de FitzJames. I answered in the affirmative, whereupon he said he should like to have a little conversation with him. I saw the danger of the position, and asked the general what might be the nature

of the inquiry. He replied that it was upon the subject of a letter which the Duc had written, accusing him of great cruelty to French prisoners, and he desired to explain to the Duc that he had been misinformed. I mentioned the matter to FitzJames, who took it most violently, and I was obliged to request him to go into another room. The general was severely punished by his superiors for addressing the Duc. This incident, which was reported at the time, nearly gave rise to a duel, as the Duc de FitzJames wanted to send a challenge to the German commander for alleged cruelties to foreign prisoners at Bazeilles, the suburb of Sedan, which was burned by the Bavarian troops during the battle of Sedan.

I had made the acquaintance of Bismarck at Frankfort early in 1851, at the time when he was in charge of the Legation in that city. The English Minister in Frankfort was at that time, I think, Sir Henry George Elliot, afterwards Ambassador to Austria, and one of my oldest friends in diplomacy. Bismarck was very interesting in his conversation, especially when our talk turned on the political outlook. He foresaw, even then, most of the complications which afterwards arose, and he had already

made up his mind how to act in certain emergencies. He had formed his own programme, and I saw how rigidly he carried it out.

I now met him at Versailles, where he was with King William. He took up his quarters in a house in the Rue de Provence, and I have a vivid recollection of one day dining with him, Odo Russell, the English Minister at Berlin, and M. Marin, director of the Western Railway of France, of which I was then acting as chairman. At this dinner I was impressed by an observation of Bismarck's; he said, 'Although I believe in the immortality of the soul, I have probably sent more men to eternity, without any religious assistance, than any man existing in the world.' There is an allusion in Dr. Moritz Busch's 'Bismarck—some Secret Pages of his History,' to this dinner. He mentions that a gentleman connected with railways was present, and draws a portrait of which it would be idle to deny that I am the original. Bismarck, according to Dr. Busch, declared the railway director was the most intelligent and practical man of the company—far superior, in fact, to the Préfet de Police, who was never able to give an answer to a single question, but on the contrary was appealing, at every moment, for help out of his

own difficulties. Bismarck declared, on the same occasion, that he found Jules Favre so unequal to his position, that he regretted, as a diplomatist, he could not change places with his opponent, if only to show him what a much better defence for France it was possible to make.

The room was well furnished, but certain incongruities struck me. Wax candles, for instance, were stuck into black wine-bottles; in one corner was a hard-looking camp-bed, and altogether the place was a curious mixture. The dinner was fairly good, and there was abundance of wine. During its progress a telegram arrived from Queen Victoria, on which Bismarck remarked: 'I know what that is. We always listen to what she says.' The allusion was uttered in a sarcastic tone.

I may add that, during the siege, Bismarck would not allow any letters or any description of what was happening outside the beleaguered city to be sent into Paris, even to the Embassies. When the investment of Paris took place, a certain banker wrote to the English papers stating that he had quitted the city in order to attend to the interests of his clients in London. I wrote to the 'Times' stating that I considered

it my duty to remain in Paris, in order that I might protect the interests of my clients, as well as to do what I could for the English community in the besieged city. This, I need scarcely say, was long before I was named Consul, an appointment which came to me by balloon, as the previous narrative has shown. Bismarck reminded me of what I had written, and added that he did his best to prevent my getting any intelligence of my family. He said this in the sarcastic manner which was habitual to him.

I wrote to the Foreign Office on March 3, stating that I had transferred the charge of the Consulate to Mr. Willoughby, as, now that the siege was over, the need of my services in such a capacity no longer existed. Lord Granville wrote to me on March 11 a flattering letter, in which he took occasion to express the 'thanks of Her Majesty's Government' for what I had been able to do on behalf of British subjects in Paris during the siege. He added that the Government entirely approved of the action I had taken, and informed me that it was proposed to confer upon me the Companionship of the Bath in order to mark the sense which the Queen and the Government entertained of what I had done

at a critical moment. Two days later the following letter was received :—

March 13th, 1871.

'Sir,—I have much pleasure in informing you that in order to manifest Her Majesty's gracious approval of your generous and zealous exertions under circumstances of no ordinary difficulty, in behalf of British subjects who were shut up in Paris during the late investment of that city by the German armies, the Queen has been pleased to confer upon you the honour of a Companionship of the Order of the Bath.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient and humble servant,
GRANVILLE.

Towards the end of March I left France, and on my arrival in London, Mr. Gladstone, always eager for news, asked me to Carlton House Terrace to breakfast. Lord Granville, the Duke of Argyll, and other Cabinet Ministers were present, and I was asked many questions about my experiences and impressions. 'What,' said one of them, 'was the moment when you felt your position in Paris most acutely?' I replied that I had felt humiliated as an Englishman when the Prussians sank seven British coal-ships at the mouth of the Seine, and Lord Granville stood up in his place in the House of Lords, and attempted to gloss the affair over by stating that the Government had received 7,000*l.* by way of

indemnity. Gladstone, at once, with great warmth, said that he perfectly coincided with my views; and he added that he felt the national insult so keenly, that, if he could have done it, he would have made reprisals by an appeal to force.

Unfortunately, as I never anticipated that I would ever find time to write my Memoirs, I destroyed, as already intimated, nearly every letter I received—a circumstance which has proved an embarrassment to me in the preparation of these jottings. Amongst the few notes which I have kept is one which gratified me not a little at the time it was written, and which I venture to think is not unworthy of a place in these papers:—

Whitehall, March 25th, 1871.

Sir,—I am very sorry not to have been at home yesterday when you did me the favour of calling, as I would have been glad personally to convey to you the expression, shared in by thousands in this country, of my sense of the spirited service rendered by you to British subjects in Paris during a season of great trial and difficulty, when others, whose duty it was to be at their post, slunk away with ignominy and disgrace.

You, and Mr. Wallace and Mr. Smyth, and a few others, have deserved well of the country, and I am glad to express to you my humble appreciation of your public conduct.

I am yours faithfully,

Robert Peel.

CHAPTER XI

THE TURF, CLUB LIFE, AND SOCIAL RECOLLECTIONS

Perhaps I ought now to say something about my association with the Turf, my club life, and some of the friendships they brought me.

All my life the Turf has had a great attraction for me, and during many years I was largely interested in the stable of M. le Comte de Lagrange—a racing establishment which was so well known, both in France and in England, that there is no necessity for me to say much about it, and I shall not be accused of exaggeration in stating that it bred the best horses and had the largest number of them of any stable in France. During my connection with the Lagrange establishment, almost every great race in France and England was won by it, and the following list of our chief winners will give an idea of the importance of our stables :—

French Derby. — Consul (1869), Insulaire (1878), Zut (1879), Albion (1881), Dandin (dead-

heat with Mr. Maurice Ephrussi's St. James, 1882).

Prix de Diane (or French Oaks).—Fille de l'Air (1864), Jenny (1868), Versigny (1880).

The Grand Prix de Paris. — Gladiateur (1865), St. Christophe (1877).

Two Thousand Guineas.—Gladiateur (1865), Charmant (1877).

The Derby.—Gladiateur (1865).

The Oaks.—Fille de l'Air (1864), Camelia (1876) second.

The St. Leger.—Gladiateur (1865), Rayon d'Or (1879).

One of our trainers was Tom Jennings, certainly one of the most skilful and, to my mind, one of the most straight of trainers I ever came across. When the Lagrange stable was wound up, in 1883, on the death of the Comte de Lagrange, I continued to keep a few racers for myself in France. My trainer was Dodge, who is still training and riding. I had always confidence in him, though he was accused of riding foul. This charge, however, in my opinion, really sprang out of the jealousy of some of the principal jockeys from England.

Dodge, when riding for me, once had a frightful fall, and his nose was broken. I hurried to him, and found him surrounded by a suspicious-looking gang, who had already taken

possession of his whip, &c. He was carried under my directions to the stand, and taken into the room set apart for casualties. The usual physician was soon on the spot, but, as the case appeared serious, I hastened to Paris and brought back with me M. Labbé, the celebrated surgeon and senator. After examining the piece of bone which had been abstracted from the nose, and which for greater safety I had put in my pocket, he decided that he must make him a new nose, and, for this purpose, cut a little of the flesh from above the bridge. Naturally Dodge was laid up for a fairly long time, but when he did reappear I asked his wife how she found him looking. 'Better than ever, Sir,' was her reply, 'for the new nose is an improvement on the old one.'

The principal persons interested in racing at that time were the Marquis d'Harcourt, Baron de Nivière, Marquis de Biron, Vicomte de Vauvineux, Baron Hottinguer, Vicomte Hallez-Claparède, Vicomte Daru, Comte Foy, Vicomte d'Haussonville, Comte Dillon, and MM. Lupin, Lefèvre, Casimir Delamarre, Fould, Reiset, Calenge, Ernest Le Roy, and, among the younger generation, the Duc de la Force, the Comte de Berteux, one of the men most willingly

Imberhorne

listened to in the councils of the English Jockey Club, and the Prince d'Arenberg, now President of the Suez Canal Company, whom I knew well in his early days, and who was a great sportsman. He went with my son Aston to Mexico during the French occupation.

I regret having given up racing, for it was a great relaxation from business. I am still breeding, however, at Imberhorne, much-admired horses from Normandy mares and English sires.

I was very early in life the driver of a team, and had the reputation of being a good whip. That reminds me that, many years ago, I was one of a party of French and English gentlemen who were driven by Mr. Chaplin, in pre-railway days, to Epsom races. As the horses cantered along the road, a postboy came galloping alongside of us, and, looking up at the box-seat, recognised the famous whip. 'How do, Mr. Chaplin?' he called out. 'You've got on a bit better than I have. Do you recollect when you used to ride the wheelers, and I the leaders?' Chaplin twisted up a five-pound note and gave it to him, and carried on a busy conversation with him for some minutes.

Chaplin was a most genial man, and had the happy knack of doing the right thing in the

right place. At a dinner given years after the above incident by the French directors of the Paris and Rouen Railway to their English colleagues, at a noted restaurant in the Palais Royal, Chaplin's health was drunk. He could not put three words together in French, and most men under such circumstances would have been quite nonplussed. He got up, however, and, putting his hand dramatically on his heart, exclaimed fervently, 'Beaucoup, beaucoup, beaucoup,' and bowing right and left sat down amidst rapturous applause.

I became a member of the Jockey Club in the Rue Scribe in January 1871, during the siege, and was proposed by Comte Dillon and Vicomte Daru. The Jockey Club, as its name implies, is essentially a racing club. It was founded in 1833, at the beginning of the reign of Louis Philippe, 'pour l'amélioration des races de chevaux en France,' on the initiative of Lord Henry Seymour, who rightly considered that something similar to the English Jockey Club was necessary in France, if horse-breeding and racing were not to be allowed to fall into hopeless discredit. Two of the King's sons, the Duc d'Orléans and the Duc de Nemours, were among the original members of the Club, who

were fourteen in number, the others being the Prince de la Moskowa, Comte Demidoff, Comte de Cambis, Chevalier de Machado, and Messrs. Caccia, Delamarre, Fasquel, Charles Laffitte (my partner in the banking house of Laffitte, Blount & Cie.), Ernest Le Roy, de Normandie, and Rieussac.

Its first President was Lord Henry Seymour, and one of its first vice-presidents was the Prince de la Moskowa, the eldest of the three sons of Marshal Ney. Lord Henry Seymour, who was one of the best-known figures of Paris during the reign of Louis Philippe, left a reputation of eccentricity which long survived him. He was the type of the 'joyeux viveur,' but he was not always *distingué* in his frolics, and was popularly known by a witty sobriquet. During the Carnival one of his favourite occupations was to throw red-hot *louis* to the crowd from a window. He was always most extravagantly dressed. M. Ernest Le Roy, who died in 1880, was the last survivor of the founders of the Club.

I owe a debt of gratitude, as a patron of the Turf, to the Jockey Club, and its members have always been most kind to me. The two Rothschilds, Barons Alphonse and Gustave, were prominent supporters of the Club. They both

had large racing studs, and gained many victories both in France and England. Baron Alphonse, Régent de la Banque de France, joined the club in 1852, and Baron Gustave a year later. One of the 'characters' of the Club was old M. Lupin. He was a genuine sportsman, but he used to keep his secrets to himself, and it was impossible to obtain an opinion from him as to the probable result of a race or the merits of a horse. Whenever approached on the subject, Lupin, in his quiet odd way, would most carefully scan the programme submitted to him and looking up at his interlocutor would say with the greatest seriousness: 'Ils sont tous si mauvais que je n'en vois pas un seul capable de gagner.'

Other members who were largely interested in racing were M. Henri Delamarre, who had some distinguished partners, Baron de Brimont, Comte de Castries, Comte Foy, and Baron de la Rochette. Baron de la Rochette was a man of great energy and ability, who, in addition to being one of the greatest racing authorities of his time in France—he acted for many years as official starter and judge of the Jockey Club—was one of the industrial forces of the country. He was the head of the well-known

iron and steel works of Fourchambault, one of the most important establishments of its kind in France. Our families subsequently became allied by the marriage of his daughter with my son Henry.

The Cercle de l'Union, on the Boulevard de la Madeleine, was founded in 1828 by the Duc de Valençay, and, although always exclusive and diplomatic, had an international character, and was not limited to French members. The furniture is simple to the point almost of severity, and represents the style which prevailed in London in the Georgian era. There are no oil portraits on the walls, but only photographs of distinguished members, like the Duc d'Aumale. When the Cercle de l'Union was started, nearly one half of the original members were Englishmen.

M. Montrond, the friend of Talleyrand, belonged to the Union in its early days. He was a man of infinite wit, who was much appreciated for his social qualities at the Court of Louis Philippe. When I joined the Cercle, I spoke very indifferent French, and he used to amuse himself by trying to improve my accent. He taught me to 'rouler les r' and 'mouiller les double ll's' as in the words Neuilly, veuillez,

&c., which is always a difficulty for foreigners. Montrond was feared for his sharp tongue as much as he was sought after for his amusing conversation. He died afterwards at Versailles in a state of poverty, having lived for a time on the charity of those who had known him in better days.

Two men whom, as a young man, I knew slightly—they moved in strangely different spheres—were Prince Talleyrand and that rough diamond George Stephenson. Talleyrand died when I was in my thirtieth year, and yet he had attained his majority when Voltaire made, in old age, his memorable visit to Paris. He met Voltaire, and there are people who say that the latter bequeathed to him his spirit. Talleyrand was lame and very ugly, and when I saw him, in the latter years of his life, he wore his white hair very long. His versatility and wit were extraordinary, and age did not seem in any way to have impaired his intellectual powers.

Though no man knew better than he how to keep his own counsel, he had the faculty of appearing perfectly open. One of his *bons mots* lingers with me still. Once, at a great reception, a certain Scottish duchess, renowned for her beauty, was present. The lady had well-turned

ankles and a good figure, and she wore a dress cut uncommonly low, which ended abruptly a few inches from the floor. Talleyrand turned and said: 'Pray, of what does the dress of her Grace —— remind you?' I, as well as the rest, was baffled. Whereupon the old diplomatist remarked: 'It reminds me of a winter's day. It begins too late and it ends too early.'

As regards George Stephenson, he looked like a broken-down old parson—at least, that was the impression he gave me. When the idea of railways was first mooted on the Continent, he went to Spain on behalf of a company, in which I was interested, to inquire into the conditions of the country, and to see whether railway development in the Peninsula was likely to prove remunerative. He travelled up and down the land, and when he came back—although paid 100*l.* for his report—contented himself with saying: 'I have been a month in the country, but have not seen during the whole of that time enough people of the right sort to fill a single train.' This is all we could obtain from him. And, after all, perhaps he was right, for very few Spanish railways have turned out to be gold mines.

Among other personages with whom circum-

stances brought me into close connection in those days was Prosper Enfantin, commonly known as Père Enfantin, perhaps the most important disciple of Saint-Simon, to whom he had been introduced by that talented firebrand, Olinde Rodrigues, for many years identified with the vagaries of that particularly obnoxious form of communism known as Saint-Simonism.

Enfantin, who was the son of a banker, and was himself connected with banking, held most advanced views not only on the subject of community of property and community of life, but also as regards community of wives, and his proceedings often gave rise to a good deal of public scandal. I remember, during the winter of 1832, his proclaiming himself Messiah of the Saint-Simonian sect, and his spending immense sums of money in banquets and festivals, which all Paris was invited to attend, the avowed object of these festivities being 'the discovery of a female Messiah to complete the male Messiah.' The quest for the female Messiah was, however, unsuccessful, and Enfantin and his disciples soon afterwards withdrew to the heights of Menilmontant, where he founded a community after his own heart, which the French Government was not long in closing.

It is not generally known that, after the suppression of his sect, Enfantin left, with a few of his disciples, for Egypt, their intention being to carry out the barring of the Nile at Assouan, for irrigation purposes, which is now being accomplished by English engineers. He failed, however, and returned to France, where some of his former disciples, who had risen to public positions, secured for him a post as Director of the Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée Railway, on the board of which he thus became my colleague, as well as on the board of the Compagnie des Eaux, of which I am still chairman, an undertaking which has extensive ramifications all over Europe. Père Enfantin was tall and handsome, a clever and entertaining talker, and a most capable business man; in fact, a combination, which it would be difficult to find outside of France, of the mad *visionnaire*, the sharp and practical man of business, and the polished man of society.

Once when I was living at St. Germain, Père Enfantin, then in his old age, and residing in the neighbourhood, expressed a wish to make the acquaintance of my wife. I asked him to come and dine with us, but without telling my wife who my guest was. She

expressed her pleasure at meeting so entertaining a man, but when, after his departure, I disclosed my guest's identity, she was astonished, though, with characteristic kindliness, she made no invidious remark.

I attended his funeral in 1864 as a delegate of the railway and water companies. He was buried as a poor man, and at the cemetery I heard some curious conversations. One person said to another, 'Etait-il honnête?' The other replied, 'C'est douteux parce qu'il a laissé de la fortune.' They evidently regarded that fact as a slur on Socialism. Another exclaimed, 'He died too soon, for if he had lived a short time longer, he would have seen the end of the institution of matrimony and of belief in God Almighty.' At this point I left the *cortège* and returned home, having heard quite enough at Père-Lachaise.

Jules Simon, the philosopher, statesman, Minister of Education under the Government of the National Defence, and Prime Minister for a short while during the Presidency of Marshal MacMahon, always impressed me as an honest man of great ability, who gave his assistance to all governments, and acted during violent times as a moderating force. He was

strongly in favour of Free Trade, and an open admirer of the English constitution. It is not generally known that Jules Simon's real name was 'Suisse.' It was by the advice of Cousin, whose assistant lecturer in philosophy he was at the Sorbonne, that he dropped the name of Suisse and called himself Simon. 'Pray drop that name of Suisse,' Cousin used to say to him. 'Is Suisse a name for any one who wants to be anybody or to do anything?' He was a great scholar, and one of the hardest workers I ever met. The translation of Plato's works, which was published under the name of Cousin, was really the work of Jules Simon.

He lived for a long term of years in the most frugal way in a small flat in the Place de la Madeleine. His motto was 'Faire le bien, récolter la calomnie, et se confier à Dieu!'

Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire was for many years my intimate friend. He was an even-minded, amiable man, of studious habits and philosophic temper, who withdrew from public life after the *coup d'état* and the establishment of the Imperial *régime*, to which he was opposed. He remained in Paris during the siege, and at that time I frequently met him at the house of Madame de Vatry, who was a connection of mine

by marriage. We dined there frequently together, and although Saint-Hilaire deeply deplored the excesses of the mob, he never uttered a bitter or contemptuous word. He was a man of lofty intelligence and inflexible principle.

Although Secretary to the Provisional Government after the Revolution of 1848, Secretary to the President of the Council under the Provisional Government of 1871, and under M. Thiers's Government, and Minister for Foreign Affairs under Jules Ferry's Ministry in 1880–81, yet his political work is very little remembered, and it is especially as a *savant*, a philosopher, and an Orientalist that he will live. His monumental translation of Aristotle's works has made his name familiar to all scholars. It must not be thought, however, that his political work was inconsiderable. He was an intimate friend of M. Thiers, and it was his direct influence which secured M. Thiers's conversion to the Republican idea when the Provisional Government at Versailles was wavering between the various forms of government, each claiming to be the only possible one for France. Whilst Minister for Foreign Affairs, he successfully exerted all his influence to prevent European intervention in the difficulty between Turkey

and Greece, and France is indebted to him for the possession of Tunis, which he annexed in 1881 in spite of the protests of the British Government.

My association with Thiers began with a chance encounter at the Café Tortoni in 1831. Tortoni, which stood at the corner of the Boulevard des Italiens and the Rue Taitbout, was in those days the favourite café of the world of politics and sport, and was at the height of its fame as a fashionable resort. Talleyrand and Montrond were among the habitués, and were especially interested in the performances of a famous billiard-player, whose name escapes me, but who was said to be unequalled. Talleyrand used to arrange encounters between him and his country friends, who had a high opinion of themselves at billiards, and used to back him for very large sums against his guests. In one instance the diplomatist made some 50,000 francs in this way. Thiers was also a frequenter of Tortoni's, and Talleyrand is reported to have given him the advice, 'You wish to rise—make enemies.'

The occasion upon which I made Thiers's acquaintance was that of a political banquet at the café, and the speech he then delivered was,

in all conscience, sarcastic enough to accomplish that end. Thiers was at that moment a powerful force in politics. He had been one of the most active opponents of the policy of Charles X., and after the flight of that monarch had been deputed to offer the crown to Louis Philippe. He had published his 'Histoire de la Révolution Française,' and was the editor of the 'National,' a newspaper of great influence in those days. He was an abundant, vivacious, versatile, and witty talker, though hardly what one would call an orator, and he had a great reputation as a financial expert.

As 'Government Commissioner' he had to report on the Budget, and his speeches on those occasions were always most interesting. I remember he once had to make his Budget speech at twenty-four hours' notice. He ascended the tribune with only a few notes and figures on slips of paper, excused himself for not having had the time to prepare a written report—it was the custom to write the Budget reports and read them from the tribune—and for more than four hours kept the audience spell-bound by the magic of his tongue. The only other statesman to whom it is possible to compare him for this gift of dealing with abstruse financial problems

and dry Budget questions, in a way interesting to the general public, is Mr. Gladstone. This must not be taken to mean, of course, that Thiers was Gladstone's equal as a financier. In some respects Thiers was very short-sighted, and his opposition to the introduction of railways, to which I have previously alluded, and of the uselessness of which I was unable to convince him, is an instance in point.

Being an opponent of the Imperial régime, Thiers practically withdrew from public life during the first half of the Empire, and devoted himself to his 'Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire;' but I continued my relations with him.

He became a deputy again a few years before the war, which he most strongly opposed, and of his career as 'Libérateur du Territoire,' as the founder of the Third Republic, as the organiser of the country after the disasters of 1870–71, and as first President of the new Republic, it is not necessary for me to speak. Bismarck had for him a regard which he had not for Thiers's collaborator, Jules Favre, and when Thiers undertook his journey to the various European capitals in order to secure intervention to bring the war to an end, and to prevent the

siege of Paris, Bismarck was not without certain misgivings.

On Thiers's return to Paris after the failure of his negotiations, I saw him, and accompanied him back to the 'frontier' as he was returning to Versailles to acquaint Bismarck with the views of the Provisional Government, then in charge of the capital, on the situation. When we passed by the batteries in the Parc de St. Cloud, he was highly interested in the scene, and he stopped and watched the firing from the Prussian lines with the keenness of a military expert.

There were also present three or four English people who had followed us to the spot, and were looking at the scene. They scarcely recognised the danger, but having seen a good deal of that sort of work, I told them that shells were treacherous missiles, and that they had better keep behind the trees. A few minutes later a shell burst almost at our feet, as if to emphasise the warning.

After the siege, when the Provisional Government and the Assemblée Nationale had their headquarters in the Theatre at Versailles, somebody suddenly introduced me to Thiers, as we met in a corridor, when he made the following

remark: 'Je fais mieux que de le connaître,' an expression which I had never heard before.

During my business visits to London one of my places of resort was the Reform Club. Amongst the people I used to meet there in former years were leading political men of the day, the portraits of some of whom adorn the handsome hall of that club. I was intimate with Lord Clarendon, Charles Pelham Villiers, Richard Cobden, Milner-Gibson, Sir William Hutt, whose ability in commercial matters was so well known; Edward Ellice, the so-called 'maker of ministers,' commonly known as 'Bear Ellice,' from his connection with the Hudson's Bay Company; and Bernal Osborne, a man of infinite wit and a staunch friend.

Villiers was a man who always believed in the necessity of marching with the times. He was a consistent, and I might add a persistent, advocate of Free Trade, and his name will always rank in that connection with those of Richard Cobden and John Bright. In earlier days he was associated with men of the stamp of Molesworth, Hume, James Mill, and George Grote, in advocating municipal and parliamentary reform, the adoption of the ballot, and a system of national education. He was a man

of much quiet courage, and from youth to age was true to the old watchword of peace, retrenchment, and reform.

Bernal Osborne was a brilliant, amusing man, who in his talk carried courage to the point of audacity. He was a man of quick resource, as is apparent from an anecdote which comes to my mind. Once, at an election in Ireland, when he was a member for Waterford, he made a strong political speech, I think at Tralee, with the result that he was hounded about the streets by an angry mob. At length, when their attentions became too pressing, he adopted the policy of the 'open door,' and dashed into a house, the door of which happened to be ajar. His political opponents were not to be baffled, so they came helter-skelter up the stairs in hot pursuit. Bernal Osborne ran to the top of the house, and, driven to bay, got into a cistern and discreetly bobbed his head down under the water. His excited pursuers looked wildly about, and, failing to discover his place of hiding, ran downstairs under the belief that they had mistaken the house.

I knew Disraeli for many years. The first time I met him was during the general election of 1841, when Sir Robert Peel was carried

triumphantly to power, with a majority pledged to Protection. Disraeli, who had formerly sat for Maidstone, was on this occasion returned for Shrewsbury in the Liberal interest. Mawley Hall in Shropshire, which has been in my family since the Conquest, and still is, gave us naturally a large interest in that county.

The contest had been a particularly warm one, and, in order to celebrate our triumph we had a public dinner, with Disraeli in the chair. The usual patriotic toasts had been duly honoured, and were followed by that to which Disraeli—who was expected to make the speech of the evening—was to reply, 'The Members for the County.' As soon as the new member was called upon to speak, a man in the company rose, and, as was the custom sometimes in those days, got on to the table. He spoke violently, and in a loud discordant voice, and, pointing to the table of honour, at which it happened thirteen were sitting, exclaimed with great heat, 'Wherever thirteen men sit down to dinner, there is a traitor amongst them,' and then, with a sudden gesture of contempt, he turned to the guest of the evening and added: 'There sits the man!'

It is impossible for me to describe the com-

motion which ensued. The man was instantly pulled down and expelled ignominiously from the room. Disraeli rose to speak, but was powerless to quell the tumult. The turmoil grew into an open fight, and the proceedings ended abruptly in the utmost confusion. It so happened that a very short time afterwards Disraeli changed his politics and his party, and so the prophecy became true.

In after life I met Disraeli frequently, and came to know him intimately. My office in the Rue de la Paix was one of his haunts in Paris. He used to lounge into my bureau there, and would sit and read the English newspapers. Sometimes he was in one of his reserved moods, and said nothing. At other times he would enter freely into conversation on the topics of the hour. I remember once, when lying ill at Spa in Belgium, Disraeli, who was staying at that health resort, used to call on me every day, and so did Bulwer Lytton, afterwards first Lord Lytton, who was also there. One day, when they were both sitting in my room at the hotel, Lytton began to explain to Disraeli his difficulty about some approaching motion in the House of Commons.

'Really, Disraeli,' he at length exclaimed, 'I

cannot vote for the Bill; it is against my principles.'

'D——n your principles!' was Dizzy's reply. 'Stick to your party.'

Mrs. Disraeli, to quote the name she bore in mid-career, though I knew her, of course, both as Mrs. Wyndham Lewis and as Lady Beaconsfield, had naturally the greatest admiration for her brilliant husband. She was a most devoted wife, and never lost a chance of advancing Disraeli's interests. She used to encourage him to put himself forward. One instance of this occurs to me at the moment. I was driving along the boulevards in Paris, with Disraeli and his wife, at a time when he was well known in the French capital. The streets were crowded, and Disraeli, lost in thought, was sitting back quietly in the carriage. Evidently his adoring spouse thought the occasion ought not to be lost, so she roused her absent-minded lord, with the words, 'Now do put yourself forward, Dizzy, and show yourself.'

I was acquainted for many years with Mr. Gladstone, Disraeli's great rival. In all matters of finance and trade he was unrivalled. His manners were affable, and he was ever ready to enter into conversation with any one in a

position to give him information. One of Mr. Gladstone's great achievements, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, was the scheme for giving annuities for Consols. The practical working of this plan was not well understood at the time, and I confess I did not grasp it until Mr. Gladstone personally explained it to me. The scheme has worked out exactly in the manner he foresaw. The annuities, which were granted in exchange for Consols, have been paid off, and, at present, we hold, if I am not mistaken, a large sum in Consols (the outcome of annuities which have ceased), as the property of the nation. Naturally, to induce the holders of Consols to convert them into annuities, they received a larger amount of interest until the annuities were paid off.

England owes to Gladstone, more than any other man, her present magnificent financial position. He had amazing force of character, and was very sanguine as to the success of anything he undertook. I often heard him in the House, and he spoke with great ease and clearness, and this was the more remarkable as he sometimes failed to receive from his own party the support to which he was entitled. After his first Premiership, his return to power was

natural. If I may fall back on my own experience as a business man, it is most difficult, I will not say impossible, for a man who has held a responsible position in public life to retire, as long as he finds support around him and thinks himself capable of being useful. In fact, the majority of his friends are not inclined under such circumstances to let him go. Gladstone's mastery of political economy was everywhere admitted, and amongst his friends in France were men of the stamp of MM. Michel Chevalier and Léon Say.

With these politicians and statesmen, I may well recall another man, who, although a Churchman, was yet, in his way, both a statesman and a politician—Cardinal Wiseman, to whom we Catholics owe the organisation of the Catholic Church in England, and the re-establishment of the hierarchy.

I knew Cardinal Wiseman intimately for more than thirty years—indeed, our friendship, which began in Rome in the early thirties, as I have already mentioned, lasted until his death in 1866.

I need not recall the effect which Cardinal Wiseman's great achievement of the re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy had in the

United Kingdom. When passing through Paris in 1850, the Cardinal showed me the encyclical letter of Pius IX. organising the Catholic hierarchy in England. The letter, which was written in Latin, was in the usual form of such documents. I plainly foresaw that the project would not be understood in England, especially as the Pope's letter contained some expressions upon which English people, unacquainted with the procedure of the Catholic Church, were almost sure to place a wrong interpretation, and I told the Cardinal that I felt sure that it would cause a great outcry. He replied that Lord John Russell, who was then Prime Minister, had seen a copy of the document, and had raised no objection; and yet, shortly afterwards, Lord John himself was the first, by his famous Durham letter, to raise a protest against the encyclical, and to fan religious passions over this harmless assumption of ecclesiastical titles by the Catholic hierarchy. But Cardinal Wiseman's tact and his conciliatory attitude won the day, and in view of subsequent events Lord John Russell must have regretted later his Durham outburst.

I remember accompanying Cardinal Wiseman to the Exhibition of 1851, at the time when

anti-Catholic feeling was at its height over the Catholic hierarchy question. We met there Robert Stephenson, Sir Charles Fox, Mr. Brassey, Sir Morton Peto, Sir Joseph Paxton, George Bidder, John Fowler, and other distinguished engineers, and I introduced His Eminence to them. Naturally they received him most courteously, and showed him everything of interest in the mechanical section of the Exhibition; and they expressed to me afterwards their high appreciation of his powers of observation and of his great facility of comprehension.

Years later I had a remarkable proof of Cardinal Wiseman's versatility. I was passing before the Exhibition buildings of 1862, which used to be called the 'Brompton boilers,' when, on my noticing a crowd entering, I asked an official what was going on. He replied, 'The Roman Catholic bishop is giving a lecture on architecture.' I went in, and listened to a most interesting conference on the subject. In his jovial manner, the Cardinal pointed out the peculiarities of modern English architecture. These, he said, made him think that, as regards domestic architecture, architects employed a large wooden model within which they built up their houses; when this was filled they had it

removed further on, so that a perfectly similar house might be built in it. His Eminence traced the history of the English cathedral and Windsor Castle. The following day, I met Father Serle, Wiseman's principal assistant, who told me that the Cardinal knew nothing about architecture, but such was his great facility of acquisition, that he had been able to master the subject in a very few days.

The mention of such names reminds me of another Englishman, of whom I saw a great deal. I was for many years an intimate friend of the fourth Marquis of Hertford, the famous art collector, whose name was so well known in Paris, and who brought together most of the pictures which form the Wallace collection. He was a man of great ability, and what the French call 'un homme d'esprit.'

Lord Hertford, who was at one time attaché at the British Embassy in Paris, continued after his accession to the title to live almost exclusively in the French capital, where he had purchased the lovely Château de Bagatelle, in the Bois de Boulogne, and found plenty of opportunities to satisfy his passion for the collection of works of art. When made a Knight of the Garter, although he always used to

despise 'these baubles of vanity,' as he called decorations, he appeared with his insignia at a ball at the British Embassy, and was much chaffed, in consequence, by his friends, but he took it very good-humouredly. He was somewhat close in money matters, and I remember him being very angry with one of the largest banks in Paris for having invested some of his money in Austrian securities, which for some time were rather low, but which afterwards recovered.

General Claremont, Military Attaché at the British Embassy, was also a great friend of the Marquis, and used to accompany him and the then Mr. Richard Wallace in their expeditions to the heights of Montmartre, or the Latin Quarter, in search of artistic treasures. It was possible in those days, during the latter years of the Empire, when collecting was not done so systematically as at present, and art dealers generally were not so well educated as to the merits and value of painters and sculptors as those of to-day, to pick up, in the most unlooked-for quarters, works of the greatest value for a mere nothing. The three friends were men of taste and connoisseurs, but Wallace was undoubtedly the best and safest of them,

and his opinion invariably used to prevail. In fact, the Marquis would never buy a picture without taking Wallace to see it and asking his opinion. The art auctions at the Rue Drouot Public Sale-rooms were also regularly attended by them, and not a few of the gems of the Wallace collection were purchased there. But Lord Hertford did not trust only to chance to put together his collection. He used to visit regularly the dealers of the Rue Taitbout and the Rue Laffitte, and when he came across something which he considered worth having, he did not mind paying a good price for it.

Lord Hertford, who loved the French, but knew their weaknesses better than they did themselves, was very much upset at the declaration of war in 1870, and apprehensive of the result, but he decided to stay in Paris. One day, early in the morning, towards the end of August, General Claremont called to inform me that Lord Hertford was dying at Bagatelle, in the Bois de Boulogne, and requested me to go with him to see his Lordship. I did so, taking the General with me in my phaeton. We drove at considerable risk through the Bois, which was full of cattle of every description, nearly starved, and maddened by hunger. Owing

to the excitement and disorganisation caused by the war, the Park animals had been left to take care of themselves. They had devoured every species of green stuff, the leaves of the trees, and even the ivy, as far as they could reach down on the walls of the fortifications (indeed, a large number had fallen into the ditch), and even thus early in the campaign had become a public danger.

On reaching Bagatelle, we found Mr. Richard Wallace, who said that his Lordship was despaired of. I went directly to the room where Lord Hertford was lying, and took his hand. The only persons present were a physician and an elderly lady. He did not know me, and died without uttering a word, while I was holding his hand. The heir to the title, who was a cousin of the deceased Marquis, living in London, was immediately telegraphed for, and on his arrival the funeral took place. I attended the service, which was solemnised at the English church in the Rue d'Aguessa by the Rev. Dr. Forbes. As all the upper class of the English colony had left Paris, I instructed my coachman, Smith, to get together as many English people as possible to attend the funeral, but, nevertheless, there was only a small

assembly. After the ceremony, the new Lord Hertford, Mr. Wallace, General Claremont, the clergyman, and myself, accompanied the remains to the cemetery of Père-Lachaise, where they lie buried.

In the course of a later conversation with Mr. Wallace, he told me he had absolutely no knowledge of the provisions of Lord Hertford's will, and was not even aware of the existence of a will, or of the name of the Marquis's solicitor. I gave him the address of Lord Hertford's legal representative in London.

The provisions of Lord Hertford's will are now well known. He left to Mr. Wallace all his property in France, his collection of paintings, and such parts of his other property as he was free to dispose of by will. He had often told me he meant to make another, which he never did, but he had made certain promises of legacies which he intended to leave. It would not be right for me to say to whom these promises were made, but in conversation with Sir Richard Wallace, at a later period, I mentioned this matter to him, and Sir Richard asked me for particulars of those promises and for the names of the persons to whom they had been made. I told him of two, one of 60,000*l.* to a gentleman

who had married a lady to whom Lord Hertford had been left guardian by one of his best friends. On receiving this information Wallace immediately wrote cheques for the amounts I told him had been promised.

Wallace remained in Paris throughout the siege, devoting himself to the relief of distress, not only among his own countrymen, but among the French as well. He was chairman of the British Charitable Fund during the siege, and the work which he and his colleagues, Sir John Rose Cormack, Dr. The Hon. Allan Herbert, Dr. Charles Shrimpton, and the Rev. Clarke Smyth, had to perform, was truly of a Herculean character. Wallace gave large sums out of his own pocket, and never refused any appeal made to him. In the difficult position I occupied at the time, as Her Majesty's Consul in Paris, his assistance was of the greatest value to me, and I had perhaps more opportunities than any others to see the extent of his work. He was indeed my best friend, and I never knew a finer or more generous nature.

The French Government gave him the Legion of Honour, and his name was bestowed upon one of the finest boulevards running along the Bois de Boulogne, the Boulevard Richard

Wallace, which goes from the Boulevard Maillot to the Porte de Madrid, whilst Her Majesty's Government gave him a knighthood. After the war Sir Richard Wallace presented the city of Paris, where public drinking accommodation was of the most miserable and inadequate nature, with one thousand public drinking fountains of an artistic design, which stand in the chief thoroughfares. The municipal authorities have since added a considerable number of exactly the same design, and the fountains are generally spoken of by the people as 'les Wallace.'

Sir Richard Wallace was one of the few people whose marriage I performed during my brief tenure of office as British Consul in Paris, for, in spite of the siege and of starvation, British people were getting married, though not in large numbers, and I was called upon to perform three marriages. A curious story attaches to these marriages, as the question afterwards arose whether the marriages were legally valid under the Foreign Marriages Act then in force. I had been appointed Consul, but held no certificate to perform marriages. If I had been Vice-Consul to, or Acting-Consul in the room of, the gentleman who occupied the post when the war broke out, the marriages

would have been valid, as I should have been acting as his deputy and he held the necessary certificates. But my appointment was as Consul, independent of my predecessor's position or office, and this made all the difference. Sir Richard's marriage was re-performed as soon as this came out, and advertisements were put in the papers requesting the other couples, who could no longer be traced, to do the same, but no one ever presented himself at the Consulate for the purpose.

Lady Wallace, who was the daughter of a French officer, survived her husband, and at her death presented Hertford House and its magnificent pictures and other art treasures to the British nation, and also bequeathed princely sums to charities both in Paris and in London.

CHAPTER XII

BACKWARD GLANCES

During my career, I have known eight English ambassadors to France, Lord Granville, Lord Normanby, two Lords Cowley, Lord Lyons, Lord Lytton, Lord Dufferin, and Sir Edmund Monson. During the same period, there were upwards of forty French ambassadors to England.

Lord Granville and Lord Normanby have already been mentioned in these pages, when I spoke of my first experiences in Paris, and of the Catholic Emancipation question. Before coming into contact with Lord Normanby as Ambassador to France during the eventful reign of Louis Philippe and the Republic of 1848, I had known him as an active advocate of Catholic Emancipation. In fact he was appointed Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland to inaugurate the new *régime*, and his period of office was one of the most peaceful in the history of the country. The

liberal-mindedness and tact which he displayed in home politics he carried abroad, and he was of the utmost service to British interests in France at a time when British capital and enterprise were so extensively engaged in railway building and in engineering works in that country.

With the first Lord Cowley, who succeeded Lord Normanby, when Napoleon III. proclaimed himself Emperor, I had but very few opportunities of coming into contact. The second Lord Cowley was a strong partisan of Napoleon III., and as my feelings, owing to my connection with the Orleans family, lay in quite another direction, I saw very little of him. Just before the outbreak of the Franco-German war, I asked Colonel Claremont, the military attaché, to inform him that the French Government were placing provisions, hay, and military stores and ammunition on all our railway stations, were having trains loaded, and making feverish preparations for a campaign. My efforts to impress Lord Cowley with the gravity of the situation were unavailing. The Ambassador merely replied that there was no occasion for alarm, that they had got the Emperor in a corner, and there would be no war, but a congress would be

held which would settle all difficulties without bloodshed. A few days later war was declared.

Lord Lyons was what M. Waddington once described him, 'a diplomatist imbued with a high sense of public duty.' He had a strong and sincere desire to see England and France acting together to their common advantage, and during his twenty years of office as ambassador in Paris, had the goodwill of French statesmen, whether Monarchical, Imperialist, or Republican. He was an indifferent speaker, and, being of a shy and retiring disposition, he led too secluded a life to be popular in French society. He was, in truth, in spite of his sagacity and judgment, out of touch with the French people.

M. Dufaure, Thiers's Minister of Justice, once asked him, 'My Lord, how many households in Paris are you acquainted with, who live in apartments on the fourth floor?' The Ambassador was forced to admit that he knew none. 'Then you do not know the Parisian,' was the blunt rejoinder. When calling upon him once at the Embassy, I found that a certain well-known journalist had preceded me. The visitor was laying down the law in loud tones, and when, after his departure, the Ambassador received me, I took occasion to point out to

him that it was scarcely advisable—if I might be allowed to say so—to discuss State matters in such loud tones, adding, 'I heard every word that was said, my Lord, as I sat in the anteroom.' 'Ah!' exclaimed Lord Lyons, 'but even then you could not hear what I said, for I said nothing.' He always had the art of keeping his own counsel.

During the Exhibition of 1878, when the Prince and Princess of Wales were in Paris, a grand ball was given in honour of their Royal Highnesses. But the Queen's representative did not look as if he enjoyed it. A lady was overheard remarking: 'Just see Lord Lyons, how wretched he looks!' And His Excellency's embarrassment was amusing to witness, when the Princess of Wales tried in vain to induce him to take a turn in the cotillon with Her Royal Highness.

I was intimate with Lord Lytton, and knew him from the days when he was an attaché in Paris. He frequented my house, and was always lively and amusing, and a great dancer at the balls we gave. He was a general favourite in society, very clever, well read, and highly educated. Afterwards I saw him at Vienna, where he was first secretary under Lord Loftus, when I

was in the city with Baron James Rothschild and Samuel Laing, late chairman of the London and Brighton Railway. When Lytton was second secretary in Paris, I seldom saw him, because at that time I went very little into society, owing to a sad family bereavement. When, however, he came to Paris as ambassador in 1888, he was highly popular not only with the French, but also with the British colony in Paris, a body very hard to please, and among whom very few British ambassadors have been popular. Lord Lytton was frank and open, without pretension, said what he thought, took an intelligent interest in commercial matters, and in the questions affecting the positions of British subjects in France, and never feared to broach any matter with the British Chamber of Commerce, of which I was president. He always received us courteously, and gave every assistance in his power. He always used to attend our banquet and our annual ball at the Chamber, and not only opened the ball, but did his best to make it as lively as possible.

One morning, Lady Lytton sent for me to come at once and see him. He thought himself very ill, and I sat with him for some time, and did my best to reassure him; but, to my astonishment and

grief, he was in a much worse state than either the physicians or myself imagined, and his death was deeply regretted. At the public funeral, which I attended, I was one of the pall-bearers, holding the *cordon* next to Marshal Canrobert. The whole way from the Embassy to the Western Railway Station was lined with troops. After the performance of the religious service, the remains were placed in a railway waggon, arranged for the purpose, and let down to the passenger station underneath by electric signal, and sent on to Dieppe by special train. The coffin was covered with the Union Jack which remained on it till its arrival at Knebworth.

Lord Lytton had a successor worthy of him in the person of my old friend Lord Dufferin, whom I have had the grief to lose as these Memoirs are passing through the press. Lord Dufferin was, if possible, even more popular in Paris than he had been as Governor-General of Canada and as Viceroy of India, and, considering the difficult times he had to go through, this is no empty compliment to pay to him. His popularity was shared by Lady Dufferin, whose qualities as a hostess endeared her to the French aristocracy, whilst her deep interest in the welfare of the British residents, her charm

of manners, her kindness, and her charity made her the idol of the British colony. She was at the head of no less than four charities, and every year placed the Embassy at the disposal of those charities for their meetings, and herself took the chair and made a speech, giving an account of the year's work. Although naturally shy, she used on these occasions to acquit herself to perfection, and I remember once Lord Dufferin, rising after her, laughingly remarked that he had made up his mind never to speak again, and would leave that to his wife.

The social functions at the Embassy were perhaps never more perfectly fulfilled, at least since the brilliant days of Lord Granville, and it was during Lord Dufferin's period of office that the annual banquets of the British Chamber of Commerce assumed an international importance. The 'British Ambassador's Guildhall speech,' as it came to be called, began to be looked forward to annually as an event of the greatest moment. More than once, indeed, Lord Dufferin's eloquence had the power of smoothing troubled waters, and of this an instance is worth recording, which will do more than any words of mine to give an idea of

his ability in this direction.. It was in 1893, a short time after Lord Dufferin's appointment to Paris, and a section of the Paris press were carrying on a violent campaign against him, charging him with having come to Paris with the fell design of breaking up the new Franco-Russian alliance, and accusing him of organising a campaign of corruption, and of secretly distributing millions to purchase the press and public men. Lord Dufferin was the chief guest at the banquet of the British Chamber, and I cannot resist the temptation of quoting his speech in full.

In proposing his health, I had said:

You have passed through what is now frequently called 'un temps difficile,' and you have mastered the position, and you have held our flag as high as ever it was. I remember now you told us this (after explaining to us the large armies you had seen in India), that as long as you were ambassador here, if there was war between the country you represent and this country you would ask that a gibbet should be raised on the frontier, and that you should be executed. I am sure that as long as you hold the position of ambassador between France and England your life will be perfectly safe. My Lord, I am now about to touch upon a serious and very delicate matter. I hesitate to say, but for some time past it has been thought proper to attack our diplomatic court in

general in this country, and they have dared to say something against you. Allow me to tell you that not only here, but all over the world, these attacks have been received with the greatest indignation. I have known the English diplomatic service for many years, and I say there never can be an attack against it. I do not know what takes place with other countries, but with ours it has always been honest, it has always been honourable, and I trust it always will be.

Lord Dufferin spoke as follows:—

Sir Edward Blount, ladies and gentlemen, I am sure it will be a great relief to many of those present to know that a recent attack of influenza has rendered me perfectly harmless as an after-dinner speaker, and instead of embarking upon a laborious investigation of the commercial relations between England and France—which, by the by, at this moment would prove by no means a cheerful topic of discussion at a convivial meeting—I shall be forced by the dilapidated condition of my mental powers to confine myself to simply thanking you, ladies and gentlemen, as I do most sincerely, for the kind way in which you have received the mention of my name, and you, Sir Edward Blount, for the indulgent and complimentary terms in which you have proposed my health. It is always a pleasure to me to find myself surrounded by my own countrymen, and to be able to show my sympathy and interest in all their undertakings. And with these few words I should certainly have concluded, had it not been for the allusion which Sir Edward Blount made to some recent attacks in the

French newspapers of which I and the other ambassadors have been the object. Sir Edward, indeed, said, with some appearance of truth, that, thanks to the peaceful aspect of Europe, there has been no occasion to hang our diplomatists upon any of the adjoining frontiers. But, though I and my colleagues have escaped this untoward fate for the present, we have been rather mercilessly gibbeted in some of the Paris newspapers.

Now, I don't wish to refer to what is past in an ill-tempered or acrimonious spirit, for I am willing to believe that these attacks have emanated rather from the ignorance and naïveté than the malice of their authors; but it is certainly new to my experience that an ambassador, the personal representative of his sovereign, should be caught up by the 'engrenage' of the domestic polemics of the country to whose government he is accredited. Hitherto it has been considered that his great office, and the majesty of the sovereign and country he represents, as well as the courtesy and hospitality of the nation amongst which he resides, were sufficient to secure him in the enjoyment of that semi-conventual obscurity which is his proper element. But, unfortunately, these safeguards have not proved sufficient, and I have seen myself repeatedly accused in widely circulated papers, whose statements undoubtedly have carried conviction with them to vast numbers of people, of the most disgraceful and abominable conduct —of acts which, if proved, would justify my being summoned to a bar of a criminal court. It may, of course, be said that these assaults are beneath my notice. Well, they are so far beneath my

notice that I have not thought it worth while to make them the subject of any official complaint, but to-night we are for the moment in England ; those I see around me are as much concerned, I am sure, with my good name as I myself could be ; and it has always been my practice, whenever I meet a lie, to nail it at once to the counter. Moreover, as the monstrous fabrications to which Sir Edward has referred would militate against my usefulness as an ambassador, if even partially credited, I do not hesitate to take this opportunity to say that the whole series of assertions, which have been so industriously propagated—including the absurd statement that I arrived in France furnished with an enormous sum of money (3,000,000 francs, I think, was the sum named) to be applied to the corruption of the French press and of French politicians, with the view of breaking up the Franco-Russian alliance—is not only untrue in the widest acceptation of that term, but that there is not and there never has been a shade or a shadow of substance in any of the various allegations which, from time to time, have been issued, with the view of building up this inconceivable mystification.

Ladies and gentlemen, the exponents of public opinion in France who write for the press comprise some of the most delightful, clever, and gifted publicists that are to be found in any country in the world. Many of them are honoured members of the Senate or of the Chamber, and the whole press of France is remarkable for its literary excellence and its intelligent handling of political topics. But I regret to say that, with the exception of a casual

exchange of courtesies with one or two distinguished individuals whom I have met at some social gathering, I have hitherto had no relations, whether directly or indirectly—and when I say indirectly I mean through the medium of any third person—with any gentlemen connected with the press of France. As for the enterprising and persevering interviewer, I keep studiously clear of all contact with him, warned by the bones and empty skulls of so many of my colleagues and predecessors that whiten the entrance to his den. As for the three millions of francs, if I had dealt with them as is so universally asserted, the sowing of such golden seed ought certainly to have produced a more abundant harvest; but those who, like myself, are attentive and respectful students of the leading articles of the French newspapers, will have failed to see in their columns any of those enthusiastic encomiums of England and of English policy which, under the suggested circumstances, I should have had the right to expect. The money must evidently have gone the way of Balak's presents to Balaam the son of Beor, and produced, instead of the anticipated blessings, I will not say curses, but a good deal of incisive and unremitting criticism.

The fact is that since I arrived in Paris I have not spent a sixpence that has not gone into the pocket of my butcher or baker, or of that harmful but necessary lady—the avenger of the sins of Adam—whose bills every householder who values his domestic peace pays with alacrity and without examination: I mean the family 'couturière.' As for the friendly feelings which animate the Russian and the French

people towards each other, I can only say that they have never formed the subject of any conversation that I have ever held with any one in this country; nor have I ever been charged with such a mission as that attributed to me. On the contrary, I can safely say this, on behalf of the British nation and on behalf of whatever administration may be in power in England —that they will never view with disfavour, or indeed with anything but sympathy and benevolence, whatever friendly understandings or combinations may take place amongst the nations of Europe which have the maintenance of peace and the general harmony of the world for their aim and object.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am sorry to have troubled you at this length upon a personal matter, but Sir Edward Blount's allusions scarcely left me any other alternative, and I am convinced, after what I have now said, that there will be no individual in this country—which is the very home of chivalry—that there will be no one who knows what honour means, who values truth, or comprehends the force of the word of a gentleman, who will not accept the assurances I have now given, in the same ample, full, complete, and explicit sense in which they have been made, as to the utter and absolute groundlessness of the whole phantasmagoria of calumny and suspicion which has been so incomprehensibly evoked. My own desire, ladies and gentlemen, is to strain every nerve in promoting friendly relations and the most amicable understanding between France and England. As you all know, I am personally a most enthusiastic admirer of French genius, of French litera-

ture, and of the French character; and I can sincerely say that next to the welfare of my own country, there is nothing I have more at heart than the happiness and prosperity of this great people, who have rendered such services to the Art, Literature, Science, and Civilisation of Europe, and in the midst of whom it is my proudest boast to be passing the last years of my official life.

The witty irony and, at the same time, the good-natured tone of this speech had an almost miraculous effect. Lord Dufferin had dexterously put 'les rieurs de son côté,' with the result that there were no more attacks upon him, and in bidding us farewell, in 1896, he could say:

This being my last speech and dying confession, I cannot refrain from taking this opportunity of expressing my grateful thanks to the various public men in this country with whom it has been my good fortune to be brought into contact. By one and all of them I have been treated with the greatest indulgence, courtesy, and consideration; nor for a single instant, no matter what controversies may have arisen between us, have our personal relations ceased to be of the pleasantest and most congenial character. Nor, if I dare to take such a liberty, would I willingly refrain from a kindly reference to the press of Paris. It is true, when I was first subject to its acute and patriotic observation, it was disposed to exhibit toward me an attitude—I hardly know what word to use—

well, I will say an attitude of 'coyness;' but there were artificial circumstances existing at the time, which sufficiently accounted for what happened; and, knowing in my heart how anxious I was to discharge the duties of my office in a spirit of loyalty and conciliation, convinced that no outsider could have come to France with a higher appreciation of the qualities of its inhabitants, or who could have already worked more harmoniously with its representatives abroad—I had little doubt that your discriminating journalists would eventually recognise in me the genuine well-wisher of their country. Nor have my anticipations been disappointed, for, even on those occasions when the newspaper polemics between the two capitals assumed a character of considerable vehemence, not to say of violence, the war of words, which hurtled to and fro, left the Embassy a Land of Goshen in the storm, unscathed and unassailed by the least injurious suggestion.

It would not be possible for me to close these Memoirs without saying something more of an institution with which I have long been connected, and of which I have kept the most pleasant memories—I mean the British Chamber of Commerce of Paris. This Chamber—which, by the way, was the pioneer and model of Chambers of Commerce abroad—was founded after the war by a number of British merchants in Paris who felt the need of such an organisation for the defence of their interests. Its usefulness

was soon recognised, and the most prominent personalities of the British commercial world in Paris soon joined it. Amongst its members in my days were the late Mr. Thomas Pilter, the late Mr. Eugene Laurier, the late Mr. Sydney Arnold, the late Mr. Priestly, Mr. T. C. Hounsfield, Mr. J. L. Pollock, Mr. John Pilter, Mr. A. Coleman, Mr. R. G. Johnston, Mr. W. Ablett, Mr. Thomas Longhurst, Mr. W. Robertson, men who have left their mark in the annals of Anglo-French trade.

I was president of the Chamber for many years. Our work, especially in the beginning, was of a very uphill character. The French authorities were not at all inclined to look favourably upon us, and the English authorities at first gave us the cold shoulder, as they were afraid the Chamber might be a source of trouble. The French Minister of Commerce, M. Léon Say, even went so far as to take advantage of a deputation from the Chamber waiting upon him, on the question of the improvement of the train and boat service between Paris and London, to read them a lecture on their audacity in calling themselves a Chamber of Commerce, and to threaten them with forcible dissolution if they did not drop the title.

Chambers of Commerce being in France official bodies regulated by law, he argued that a private association had no more right to call itself a Chamber of Commerce than it had to call itself the Chamber of Deputies or the Municipal Council.

The British merchants in Paris were not at all inclined to fall in with the views of M. Léon Say, so they did what most Englishmen in trouble do: they went to their solicitor, and the solicitor's opinion was that they should stick to their title. They transmitted this opinion to M. Léon Say, with an intimation that the utmost they could do to meet him was to cease calling themselves 'the Paris British Chamber of Commerce,' and to call themselves in future 'the British Chamber of Commerce in Paris.' M. Léon Say meanwhile had gone the way of French Ministers, the matter dropped, and the Chamber of Commerce remained the Chamber of Commerce.

But the French Government were not slow in perceiving the use of such institutions. The activity of the British Chamber and its influence in commercial matters opened their eyes, and they started a scheme of French Chambers abroad which is the most flattering compliment to the British idea. But, whilst

our British Chambers abroad are self-supporting, and have the greatest trouble in keeping themselves alive, the French Chambers receive subsidies from the Government, which materially help them in their work. The Belgian, Austro-Hungarian, Italian, and Spanish Governments imitated the French, and now in almost every capital of importance there is a complete set of Foreign Chambers of Commerce. But, too often, the only one missing is the British Chamber, for the local British colony is not rich enough to keep up such an institution, and the home merchants will not subscribe, whilst the Home Government has not yet seen what has for many years been obvious to even the poorest foreign Governments, that Chambers of Commerce abroad are the best commercial information agencies that could exist.

At the banquet given in honour of the Queen's birthday, at the British Embassy, by Lord Lytton, on June 2, 1888, he announced, in proposing the health of Her Majesty, that I—whom he described as the 'doyen of the English colony in Paris'—had that afternoon been promoted to the rank of K.C.B. I was gratified to find that, on both sides of the Channel, the announcement was received with many flattering

expressions of good will. The first letter of congratulation which reached me came from the British Chamber of Commerce, of which I was then president, and ran as follows :—

To Sir Edward Blount, K.C.B.

We, the undersigned Directors of the Chamber of Commerce in Paris, beg leave, on behalf of its members, to offer you our hearty congratulations on the occasion of the well-deserved honour conferred upon you by Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen in naming you Knight Commander of the Bath.

By your perseverance and ability, you have achieved a position which few Englishmen have ever attained in France, and by your urbanity and readiness to oblige you have gained the esteem, sympathy, and good will of both your countrymen and the French people.

The beneficial results of your great influence were at once felt by our Board, and we, your colleagues, sincerely hope that you will be long with us to promote the welfare and interests of the British Chamber of Commerce in Paris.

By order of the Board.

(Signed) Eug. Laurier, Vice-President.
T. Longhurst, Hon. Secretary.

June 1888.

As soon as I returned to England I was made the recipient, from my friends and neighbours at East Grinstead, of an illuminated address of congratulation. I will not quote the com-

plimentary words which were spoken on that occasion, though I feel deeply grateful for such a mark of confidence from the people around my own home. The address, which was signed by the chief inhabitants of the town of East Grinstead, ran as follows :—

To Sir Edward Charles Blount, K.C.B. &c.

We the undersigned, representing the trades and inhabitants generally of East Grinstead, beg to offer you our sincere and hearty congratulations on the distinguished honour recently conferred upon you by Her Majesty the Queen.

We are all aware of the priceless services you have rendered our fellow-countrymen in a foreign land, particularly at a critical and historical moment, and we also highly appreciate the interest you and your family have always taken in the welfare of this town and neighbourhood. We feel proud to think that you are an Englishman and a townsman, and we sincerely hope that you and your beloved wife, Lady Blount, may live many years to enjoy the honour so deservedly bestowed, but which, we venture to think, ought to have been even greater.

My reply was as follows :—

I feel excessively obliged to you, and I can assure you, as probably you are aware, that it is rather difficult on these occasions to give expression to what one feels. I always find in such a case as the present that language is but a very feeble interpreter of one's feelings. It is very pleasing indeed to us to know that we have given you such general satisfaction. The

honour which I received I am very thankful for to Her Majesty, but what has touched me more than anything else is the sentiment which has been expressed all over England and in all foreign parts in the congratulations which I have received from nearly every country in Europe.

Naturally, having had to work hard for fifty years, and being the younger son of a younger son, that is very satisfactory; but to feel that I have given satisfaction to you, gentlemen, and to my own countrymen here at home and scattered abroad in all parts of the world, is a still greater source of gratification.

Since I have been in this country I have done all I could to live well with everybody. Having lived out of my own country so many years, I have not interfered with politics at all; but this I know and feel, that wherever an Englishman may be, whether at home or abroad, he is always loyal.

It frequently occurs to me to have to preside at meetings of my fellow countrymen in France, and on such an occasion recently I had the English Ambassador (Lord Lytton) on one side and a French Minister on the other. When I proposed the health of the Queen, it was received with that same cordial enthusiasm which always greets it at home; and in no man's heart is the love of his own native land more deeply impressed than in the heart of him whose life is spent away from it.

It is said in the address that I rendered some services to my countrymen during the siege of Paris. Circumstances forced me into a position I do not regret having occupied. For diplomatic reasons the English Ambassador left the country,

the last Attaché went away, the Consul went away, and I, being well known to the French people and to all parties, was called on to represent the English Government.

A very short time afterwards I received, by pigeon, I think, that being our only means of communication, a nomination as Consul, and I remained Consul during the siege. I got all my family away. By some secret strategy I got my wife and family away by the last train which left Paris, and I remained alone. At that time I had 2,200 English poor on my hands, and I did what I could for them. I was very ably assisted by one whose name you will all probably know, Sir Richard Wallace, who gave me valuable aid. Those were very hard times. We ate a great deal of horse-flesh, and a young horse is not at all bad eating. I and my friends also ate donkeys. An old donkey is a very disagreeable animal, as obstinate and tough after his death as in his lifetime, but I never ate better food than a cut from the ribs of a young donkey.

We had the hump of a camel once at a dinner at the Jockey Club. I cannot say we had high indulgences, but we were very happy to mix bad bread with indifferent wine. I had a piece of luck. I had been living in the country, and had two cows, one of which I slaughtered. My coachman had been a butcher, and he salted my cow, and so long as I live I shall never forget the gratitude I feel for the memory of that cow. The Jockey Club asked me for some cow, and they got it.

I assisted at many battles. You have seen pictures of battles, but they in no way represent the reality. It is the greatest horror a man can

possibly see. We read of dashing charges of cavalry—they charge but once, and the rest is a miserable carnage, and I don't think any man can say in general, until he has reflected, which side has gained a victory.

I thank Heaven that we are here surrounded by what is called the 'Silver Streak.' That has been rather painful to me at times, rather difficult to cross; but I bless Providence we have it here. These are of course all minor matters, and I won't go on longer. The other day I was presiding at a dinner, and I had Lord Lytton at my side. He made reference to a remark which occurs in one of the novels written by his uncle Bulwer Lytton—that he could never understand, as life was so short, why speeches were so long. I feel the same, so I will close by thanking you from the bottom of my heart for your kind expressions. I hope I may be long spared to live in such a charming country as this. It is a deep satisfaction to Lady Blount and myself to see how we are received here, and our gratification is doubled when we know we have your good will.

I am well acquainted with M. Loubet, the present President of the Republic. Many years ago, when surveys were being made for the construction of the Paris-Lyon-Méditerranée line, I accompanied the engineers and surveyors of the projected railway in a journey on the banks of the Rhône, and performed the voyage from Lyons to Avignon by the river. Readers of Macaulay's Letters will remember his enthu-

siastic description of the beauties of this route, which was then the highway for travellers to the south. The question before us, at the time of this journey, was whether the railway should be made by Viviers, on the right bank of the Rhône, or by Montélimar on the left. There was great rivalry between the two places. We went first to Viviers and saw the Bishop, who at that period was the most influential authority there.

After leaving Monseigneur, we crossed the river and went to Montélimar. We paid a visit to M. Loubet, the father of the President of the Republic, who was one of the most influential personages of the town, and who, if my memory serves me right, was then mayor. I saw for the first time, on this occasion, the present President, who at that time was quite a child. I had good reasons to remember the little citizen of Montélimar, for subsequently, when M. Loubet was Minister of Public Works, circumstances brought me much in contact with him in my capacity of Chairman of the Western of France Railway. I never had to negotiate with a more able Minister—he was straightforward, took the trouble to inquire into the merits of the questions before him, expressed his opinion frankly, and did his best to facilitate our task.

I was present at the Gare Saint-Lazare to receive the new President of the Republic on his return from Versailles on the day of his election, February 18, 1899, when he expressed the great pleasure he felt to see me there; and I witnessed his departure for the Élysée, when the President was assailed by an organised mob with cries of 'Panama.' Nothing was more unjust and uncalled for than this disgraceful exhibition. M. Loubet's share in the Panama affair was simply an endeavour to stop further unnecessary scandal by people who had an interest in keeping up the agitation. He was never accused by respectable people of want of pecuniary probity. In my opinion, he performed a service to his country in this matter, and I rejoice to see that the French people have at last realised that the character of their President is above attack. M. Loubet is to-day one of the most popular men in France, and deservedly so, and the professional agitators, who tried to precipitate a crisis by forcing him to resign, would not to-day dare to attempt to get up a demonstration against him in the streets of Paris.

Since I began these Memoirs, not only the British Empire, but the whole world, has been called to mourn the death of Queen Victoria,

the greatest and best of sovereigns, and I cannot lay down my pen without adding a personal tribute of admiration and respect to her memory. Her invariable kindness and gracious manner to me, on all occasions, are amongst the most treasured and honoured of my recollections. From His Majesty also, I have always received the greatest sympathy and kindness, and it is with feelings of respect and admiration that I renew the expression of my loyalty to King Edward VII. Born in the reign of George III., I witnessed, as a lad of eleven, the coronation of George IV. in company with my father, who was manager of the Duke of Norfolk's boroughs. I was also present at the coronation of William IV. and that of Queen Victoria. On the eve of the coronation of the fifth English sovereign to whom I have owed allegiance, I can only pray God to extend His blessing upon him, and to grant him a long and prosperous reign.

It is time now to draw these reminiscences to a close, though I have left much unsaid of more or less public interest. My own life has been full, many-sided, and rich in friendships, and it is a satisfaction to me to think that, in some measure at least, I have been able to be of service both to England and to France.

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